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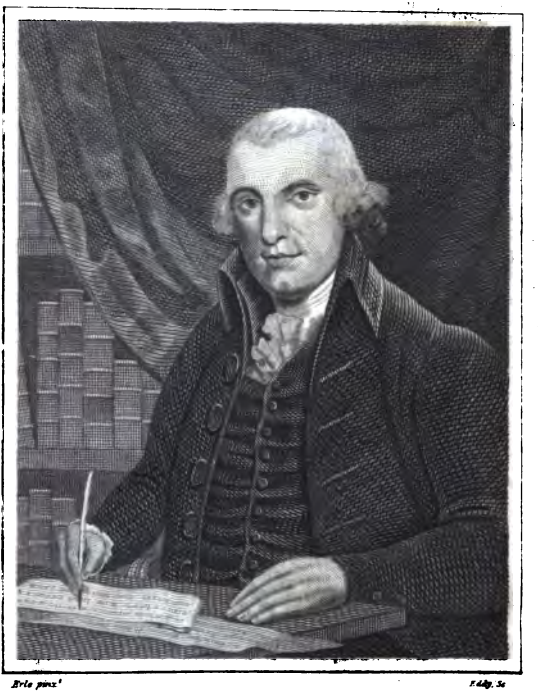

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REV. ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

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1831.

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THE

UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

EXHIBITED IN

FOUR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A

MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND;

COMPREHENDING THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL REAL CONVERSATIONS WHICH THE AUTHOR HAD WITH VARIOUS PERSONS BOTH IN AMERICA AND EUROPE, ON THAT

INTERESTING SUBJECT:

CHIEFLY DESIGNED

TO STATE, AND FAIRLY TO ANSWER THE MOST OBJECTIONS THAT ARE BROUGHT AGAINST IT, FROM THE

SCRIPTURES.

BY JOHN WINCHESTER.

To this edition is prefixed, a brief account of the *means* and *manner* of the author's *embracing these sentiments;* intermixed with some SKETCHES of his LIFE during *four years.*

Boston:
PUBLISHED BY BENJAMIN B. MUSSEY.
1831.

From the Critical Review, for September, 1

"Our Author, with great candor and extensive knov
of the subject, discusses the doctrine of eternal p
ments. He thinks that there will be a period when
sinner will be restored to the Divine favor. This do
is perfectly consistent with the benevolence of the
It is supported by many wise and good men; nor is
any reason to suppose that it will be perverted *to ser*
purposes of vice and immorality. Mr. WINCHEST
his defence of it, shews much charity, much humanit
no little share of learning. The fifth Dialogue alone,
relates to the design and tendency of punishment,
furnish some little foundation for a difference of op
but in a question so greatly above human attainmen
mind would be lost in the inquiry, and not greatly b
ted by the discussion. The question of the Universa
toration, must be examined as Mr. WINCHESTER has
by the word of God, as revealed at different time
particularly in the Gospel."

N. B. A considerable part of the fifth Dialogue,
printed in the Lectures on the Prophecies, is left
this edition, and the remaining part is enclosed i
fourth Dialogue.

HOAG & ATWOOD'S Press.....Concord, N.H.

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PREFACE.

TO THE READER.

As I now present my Friends and the Public with a new edition of the Dialogues on the UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, which by many has been long desired, perhaps it may be acceptable to some for me to give a brief account how I came first to the knowledge of this part of the counsel of God, which I have not shunned freely to declare, both by word and writing, as I have found opportunity and necessity.

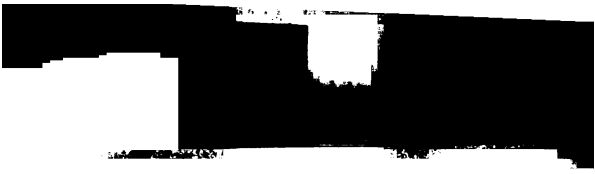
I think it was in the beginning of the year 1778, being in South-Carolina, upon the river Pee Dee, where I was at that time minister, that I called to see a friend, who first put into my hands that valuable book written by *Paul Siegvolk*, and which is called *The Everlasting Gospel*, of which I have lately published a new edition. I was desired to tell what it meant to hold forth, as my friend could not tell by any means what to make of it on account of the singularity and strangeness of the sentiments therein contained; although the language is very plain and clear, and by no means dark, mystical or obscure.

I opened the book as I was desired, and dipped into it here and there, for a half an hour perhaps, was very soon able to tell what the Author aimed at, viz. that there would be a final

end of sin and misery, and that all fallen creatures would be restored by Jesus Christ to a state of holiness and happiness, after such as were rebellious had suffered in proportion to their crimes. I had never seen any thing of the sort before in all my life; and I seemed struck with several ideas that I glanced over, such as the inconsistency and impossibility of both good and evil always existing in the universe: and especially his observations upon the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, shewing that it was used for what never had a beginning, and would never have an end, as the being and perfections of God; and that it was also applied to things which had a beginning, but should never have an end, as the being and happiness of the righteous; and, that it was also frequently used to express things, times and seasons which had both beginning and end; which he therefore called *periodical eternities*, and gave a great number of instances of this sort, which could not be denied; and he contended that the *everlasting punishment* threatened to the wicked, did not belong to the first nor to the second, but to the third class of these durations.

But as I was only desired to tell what the author meant, when I had satisfied my friend in that respect, I laid the book down, and I believe we both concluded it to be a pleasant, ingenious hypothesis, but had no serious thoughts of its being true; and for my part, I determined not to trouble myself about it, or to think any more of the matter. And as the book had been sent a considerable distance for my friend to read, I *suppose* it was soon after sent back; for I saw it no

more, nor heard any thing farther about it. The following summer I went a journey into Virginia, and happening to mention the subject to a minister there, he told me that a few years before, it had been a subject of controversy in the puplic papers, between a clergyman who defended, and a gentleman of the law, who denied the proper endless eternity of punishment; and he told me that this gentleman who denied it, had advanced, that the translators of the Bible had rendered the very same Greek word, by very different English words, sometimes rendering it *forever*, and sometimes *world*; and that if they had uniformly rendered it by one English word, it would have been evident to all readers, that no argument for *endless misery*, could have been drawn therefrom. I was told also while I was in Virginia, that a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, had a few years before, given out that he had some wonderful thing to make known to his hearers, which he would preach upon some Sunday, but did no mention when. This raised the public curiosity, and great numbers attended his place of worship in hopes of hearing what this wonderful thing might be; but for a considerable time the matter was undiscovered. But at last he gave out, that on the next Sunday he would open this great secret. Vast numbers of people flocked to hear what it could be. When he came to declare what it was, behold! it was a wonderful piece of news indeed, such as had never been heard before in any pulpit in Virginia. It was nothing short of the doctrine of the *Restoration*. I think, to the best of my remembrance, they told me, that he opened and



enlarged upon it for two Sundays, and never preached any more, being immediately after seized with sickness, which terminated in his death. And this was generally esteemed as a judgment that fell upon him for daring to preach such a wicked, false, and dangerous opinion: and that God cut him off from the land of the living, to testify his displeasure against him; and to terrify others from daring to follow his example, or believe his sentiments. But perhaps this might have been some worthy, learned, pious man, who had long concealed this grand truth in his heart, and had derived much satisfaction therefrom, and longed to proclaim it to others, for their good.—And, at last, notwithstanding the opposition that he might expect, resolved so to do; and accordingly was enabled, just before his time came to depart out of this world, to bear a faithful testimony to this most grand and important of all God's purposes. And having performed his duty, his master called him to receive his reward, and gave him the glorious plaudit of, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

As for the vain judgments of men, they are not to be regarded. "For they know not the thoughts of the Lord neither understand they his counsel." "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; and their departure is taken for misery. And their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet *is their hope* full of immortality. And having

been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and hath received them as a burnt-offering. And in the time of their visitation, they shall shine, and run to and fro, like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth; and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him; for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect." "But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest."

I am apt to think, therefore, that this minister was one of uncommon faith and love, and as he believed God, so he loved mankind, and wished them to know the amazing riches of their Redeemer's love towards them; and when he had openly delivered this testimony, he was called to his rest.

Indeed, if the enemies of this doctrine had been true prophets, I should have died and gone to hell long ago; for no sooner was it known I had embraced it, but some gave out that I would not live a year; but I have already lived eleven. One of my old friends desired me to take particular notice of what he said, which he expressed in these words, "Mind what I tell you. In six months from this time, you will turn Deist, and deny all revealed religion; and in twelve months you will turn Atheist, deny the being of God, and abandon yourself to all kinds of open wickedness." Blessed be God, this has also proved [illegible]. And they generally seemed to agree to

prophesy certain damnation to me whenever I should depart out of this world. But I trust this is equally false,—"For I know whom I have believed, (or trusted) and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

But to return to my narrative:

Sometime after I returned back to South-Carolina, a physician with whom I had been acquainted in Virginia, came to live in the parish where I was minister; and among his books I found *the Everlasting Gospel* by *Paul Siegvolk*; this was the second copy that had fell in my way, and I read a little more therein, but as yet had not the least thought that ever I should embrace his sentiments; yet some of his arguments appeared very conclusive, and I could not wholly shake them off, but I concluded to let them alone, and not investigate the matter; and therefore I never gave the book even so much as one cursory reading, till with great difficulty I procured one in the city of Philidelphia, more than two years afterwards.

In the year 1779, I found myself much stirred up to exhort my fellow creatures to repent, believe, and obey the Gospel, and began to adopt a more open and general method of preaching than I had used for some years before; having been deemed one of the most consistent Calvinists upon the continent, much upon the plan of Dr. Gill, whom I esteemed almost as an oracle. But now my heart being opened, and viewing the worth of souls, I felt great compassion towards them, and invited them with all my might *to fly for* mercy to the arms of Christ, who died

for them, and who was willing to save them. I was gradually led into this way of preaching, without considering any thing about its consistency with strict Calvinism, but finding myself ever happy and comfortable in my own mind, and that this method of preaching was highly useful, I continued to go in the same course.

About this time I began to find uncommon desires for the conversion and salvation of the poor negroes, who were very numerous in that part of the country; but whom none of my predecessors, that I could learn, had ever taken pains to instruct in the principles of Christianity; neither had any single slave, either man, or woman been baptized until that summer, in the whole parish (which was very large) that I ever heard of.

The prejudices which the slaves had against Christianity, on account of the severities practised upon them by professing Christians, both ministers and people, might be one principal reason why they could not be brought to attend to religious instruction. But they had no prejudice against me on this score, as I never had any thing to do with slavery, but on the contrary condemned it; and this being pretty generally known, operated so upon the minds of those poor creatures, that they shewed a disposition to attend my ministry, more than they had ever shewed to any other. But still I never had addressed them in particular, and indeed had hardly any hopes of doing them good. But one evening seeing a number of them at the door of the house, where I was preaching, I found myself constrained as it were, to go to the door,

and tell them, that Jesus Christ loved them, and died for them, as well as for us white people, and that they might come and believe in him and welcome. And I gave them as warm and pressing an invitation as I could, to comply with the glorious gospel. This short discourse addressed immediately to them, took greater effect than can be well imagined. There were about thirty from one plantation in the neighborhood present; (besides others) these returned home, and did not even give sleep to their eyes, as they afterwards informed me, until they had settled every quarrel among themselves, and according to their form of marriage, had married every man to the woman with whom he lived; had restored whatever one had unjustly taken from another; and determined from that time to seek the Lord diligently. From that very evening they began constantly to pray to the Lord, and so continued; and he was fond of them. I continued to instruct them, and within three months from the first of June, I baptized more than thirty blacks belonging to that plantation, besides as many others, as in the whole made up one hundred, of which sixty-three were men, and thirty-seven were women, all which were born in Africa, or immediately descended from such as were natives of that unhappy country.

My preaching was not only useful to the poor slaves, but also to great numbers of the white people, of whom I baptized upon profession of repentance and faith in Christ, about one hundred and thirty-nine persons within the same space. This was a summer of great success, and *I shall remember* that happy season with pleas-

ure while I live. This summer I received some farther dawnings of the day of the general Restoration in my mind, for upon considering several Scriptures, such as these, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Isai. liii, 11. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Rev. vii. 9. I became fully persuaded that the number of the finally saved would equal if not exceed the number of the lost. And I was so forcibly impressed with this new and very joyful discovery, that I not only conversed in that strain privately, but boldly preached it in the congregation, which generally consisted of nearly a thousand persons upon Sundays. Some of the people to whom I had mentioned something respecting the sentiment, thought that I was going at once to declare myself in favor of the *general Restoration.* But that was as yet far from being the case; though some of the arguments which I had glanced upon in that book, *the Everlasting Gospel,* would frequently present themselves to my mind in such a forcible manner that I could scarcely withstand their evidence.

In the month of September I left South-Carolina, on a visit to my friends in New-England, intending however to return to my people again; but to prevent their being left destitute, I procured the Rev. Mr. *Botsford* to come and supply them, upon this condition, that whenever I should

return, he should resign the congregation to me again, if I required it. But he has remained the constant Pastor ever since. I then travelled slowly through the continent, preached to the people, and conversing with my friends to whom sometimes in private I proposed some of the arguments in favor of the *general Restoration*, which I had read in the *Everlasting Gospel*, on purpose to see what answers they could give; and this I did especially to able ministers: but to my surprise often found them quite at a stand, not knowing what to say. And some were almost overpowered with even the weak manner in which I was capable of holding forth the arguments in favor of the *Restoration*.—And oftentimes the answer that some of the greatest men gave, were such as tended to increase my doubts respecting *endless misery*, rather than to remove them. I remember once, that I asked the Rev. Mr. *Manning*, President of Rhode-Island College, and who was at that time one of my dearest friends, what was the strongest argument that he could use in favor of the doctrine of *endless misery*? He answered, that it was the nature of God to lay the greatest possible restraint upon sin, and therefore he had threatened it with *endless punishment*, as the highest restraint he could possibly lay upon it. This argument is answered in the third dialogue. Thus after much seeking I could find no satisfaction in the matter; but still my doubts increased. Notwithstanding, I withstood the doctrine of the *Restoration* with all my might, and sometimes preached publicly against it with all the force I could muster. Yet *there was* something in its favor that gained grad-

ually upon my mind, and sometimes brought me to be almost willing to embrace it. I plainly saw that it would reconcile almost, if not quite, all difficulties of other systems; and I thought if I should ever receive it, I should be able to preach much easier, and more freely than ever, and with far greater satisfaction, which by experience, I have since found to be true. The ideas were sometimes so transporting to me, even while I professed to oppose the sentiment, that I have been constrained to set them forth in the most sublime manner that I was able; and sometimes so as actually to bring them who heard me converse upon the subject to believe and rejoice in the *Universal Restoration*, while I thought myself an opposer of it, and only proposed the arguments in its favor to see what effect they would have on such who never heard them before. And I was often carried away before I was aware, even while I intended only to let my friends hear what might be said. I remember once, while I was at my father's table in the year 1780, that I mentioned the doctrine of the *Restoration*, and finding that none in the company had ever so much as heard of such a scheme, I began to hold it forth, produced many arguments in its favor, brought up many objections, answered them in such a manner as astonished all present, and I was amazed at myself, I spoke with so much ease and readiness as I had hardly ever experienced before on any occasion.—Nay, I was so much animated with the subject that I said, that I did not doubt but that in sixty years time, that very doctrine would universally be preached, and generally embraced in that very

country, and would certainly prevail over all opposition.

This discourse made a greater impression upon the minds of those who heard it, and upon my own also, than I intended; and though I afterwards used the best arguments I could in favor of the common opinion, yet I found them insufficient wholly to remove the effects of what I had before said.

After spending about twelve months in the most delightful manner, constantly journeying and preaching with great success, to vast multitudes of people in my native country, I set off with intention to return towards *South-Carolina*. On the way I tarried some time at the Rev. Mr. Samuel Waldo's, in Pawling's Precinct, State of New-York, whose kind and friendly behaviour towards me I remember with pleasure, and mention with gratitude. I had a great deal of very agreeable conversation with him upon the matter, and he did not seem to oppose the ideas hardly at all; but only gently cautioned me against receiving any thing erroneous. He is a man of most excellent spirit, and his family was upon the whole the most delightful, agreeable and happy family that I ever knew. While I was at his house one of his children, then about twenty years of age, seemed fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine, by listening to our conversation, and was filled with great joy at the idea.—Several religious men who were on a journey, lodged at the house while I was there, got a hint of the matter, and wished to hear all that I could say in defence of it; I accordingly *gave them* some of the principal arguments

its favor, and obviated some of the most capital objections that could be brought against it; and I afterwards overheard them wishing that they had not been so curious as to have inquired so far into the subject, for they could not resist the arguments although they seemed resolved to treat the sentiments as an error.

In this state of mind, half a convert to the doctrine of the *Restoration*, I arrived in the city of Philidelphia, on the 7th of October, 1780. I intended to have left the city in a few days, and to have gone on towards South-Carolina, but the Baptist Church being destitute of a minister, they invited me to stop and preach with them, to which I was at length persuaded, and for sometime I was much followed, and there were great additions to the church. The congregations increased in such a manner, especially on Sunday evenings, that our place of worship, though large, would by no means contain them; at length leave was asked by some of my friends for me to preach in the church of St. Paul, in that city, which was granted. This was one of the largest houses of worship in Philidelphia, and equal in bigness to most of the churches in London. I think I preached there about eighteen sermons, and generally to very crowded audiences, frequently more than could possibly get into the house; most of the clergy of every denomination in the city, heard me there, and many thousands of different people. I am inclined to think, that I never preached to so many before nor since as I did sometimes in that house, and with almost universal approba-

tion. But now the time of my trouble and ca
ing down came on, and thus it was.

Soon after I arrived in that city I had enqu
ed of some friend for *The Everlasting Gosp*
which I could not light on for some time, b
they lent me Mr. Stonehouse's book upon t
Restitution of all Things, which I had nev
seen, nor heard of before; this very learn
work I read with great care, and his reasonin
arguments, and scripture proof seemed to me e
tirely satisfactory.

The friends who procured me the works
Mr. Stonehouse, were concerned at my havi
an inclination to read any thing upon the su
ject; nevertheless, though there were several
them with whom I conversed pretty freely up
the matter, and who knew of my reading M
Stonehouse's works, yet they behaved in
friendly a manner towards me, that they nev
mentioned a word of it to any, until by oth
means it came to be known and talked of.

In the house where I lodged, when I fi
came to the city, I had, in the freedom of co
versation, and with some appearance of jo
expressed myself in general terms upon the su
ject, but always in the exact words of Scriptu
or in such a manner as this, viz:—That I cou
not help hoping that God would finally bring e
ry knee to bow and *every tongue to swear;* and th
at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
things in heaven, and *things in earth;* and *thin*
under the earth; and *that every tongue* should co
fess JESUS CHRIST to be *Lord to the glory of G*
the Father. And that I hoped, *that in the di*
pensation of the fulness of times, he *might gath*

together in one all things in CHRIST, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, &c.*

Such passages as these I mentioned in this manner, hoping that they would be fulfilled. The people of the house seemed surprised, and asked me if I believed so; I answered, "That sometimes I could not help hoping that it might be so." I could hardly have imagined among friends that any danger could have arisen from my expressing a hope that the Scriptures were true.

However these false friends told a minister, whom for a number of years I had esteemed as my best and most intimate friend, that I was turned heretic, and believed the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration*, and desired him to convince me. Some time after he met with me in the street, and in a very abrupt manner told me, that he had wanted to see me for some time, that he might give me a piece of his mind; that he had been informed by such a person, that I was inclined to the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration*, and then, instead of using any argument to convince me, or taking any method for my recovery, added this *laconic speech*, "If you embrace this sentiment, I shall no longer own you for a brother." And he has hitherto been as good as his word, having never writen nor spoken to me from that day to this, and when I have since offered to shake hands with him, he refused; and yet he was one whom I esteemed above any other on earth, as a hearty, sincere, long-tried, and faithful friend. If my intimate friend treated me in such a manner, what had I not to expect from my open and avowed enemies?

I now foresaw the storm, and I determined to prepare for it, not by denying what I had said, but by examining and determining for myself, whether the sentiment was according to scripture or not. If I found that it was not, I was determined to retract, but if it was, to hold it fast, let the consequences be what they might. I had now no time to lose. I expected in a short time to be called to an account, and examined respecting this doctrine, and obliged either to *defend or deny it ;* I was already too well persuaded that it was true, to do the latter without hesitation, and yet not sufficiently for the former. For this purpose, I shut myself up chiefly in my chamber, read the Scriptures, and prayed to God to lead me into all truth, and not suffer me to embrace any error; and I think that with an upright mind, I laid myself open to believe whatever the Lord had revealed. It would be too long to tell all the teachings I had on this head; let it suffice, in short, to say, that I became so well persuaded of the truth of the *Universal Restoration*, that I was determined never to deny it, let it cost me ever so much, though all my numerous friends should forsake me, as I expected they would, and though I should be driven from men, and obliged to dwell in caves or dens of the earth, and feed on wild roots and vegetables, and suffer the loss of all things, friends, wealth, fame, health, character, and even life itself. The truth appeared to me more valuable than all things, and as I had found it, I was determined never to part with it, let what would be offered in exchange.

I had now formed my resolution, and was determined how to act when the trial came. Hitherto I had said nothing about the *Restoration* in public, and little in private; but I preached up the death of Christ, and salvation for mankind through him, without restriction. This free manner of preaching gave offence to some, who came to hear me no more. On the evening of the 22d of January, 1781, a number of the members of the church, who had heard that I held the doctrine of the *Restoration*, met me at a friend's house, to ask me the question, Whether I did or not? I acknowledged that I did, but did not wish to trouble any body with my sentiments. They desired me neither to preach them in public, nor to converse of them in private. I told them that if they would prevent people from asking me, I would say nothing upon the matter; but if people asked me concerning my sentiments, I could not deny them, and if they wished to know the reasons, I must inform them. And thus the matter was to rest; but some that were present wished to know the foundation of my sentiments, others opposed it, not wishing to hear any thing in its favor. At length it was agreed that I might read the passages of Scripture upon which I judged the doctrine of the *Restoration* to be founded, but must not add a single word of explanation on my part, and on their parts they were not to ask any questions, or make the least opposition, for if they did, I insisted upon the liberty of defending.

Accordingly I took the Bible, and read many passages in the Old and New Testaments, which I judged to contain the doctrine, and the very

reading of them convinced several of the company of the truth of the *Restoration*. There was nothing farther took place at that time: We parted with mutual agreement; I was not to preach it in the pulpit, nor to introduce it in conversation, but I would not be obliged to deny it, when asked, nor to refuse to vindicate it, if opposed; and on their parts they were not to speak of it to my prejudice, but to endeavor as much as possible, to keep the matter close, and so we parted.—But notwithstanding all the pains that could be taken, the matter got abroad, and several came to discourse with me on my principles, to whom I gave such reasons as I was able for what I believed. A little after this time, I met with another copy of the *Everlasting Gospel*, which I then read through with attention for the first time, and found much satisfaction; the arguments and Scripture proofs therein contained, seemed to me sufficient to convince all that would read with candor and attention.

I still continued to act only on the defensive, not preaching upon the subject, nor going about to private houses to make interest in my favor but if any came to me and wished me to discourse upon it, I would not refuse; and thus a number were convinced of its truth, while others violently opposed it. And thus matters continued until the latter end of March. Having heard that the German Baptists in Germantown, about 8 miles from Philidelphia, held the doctrine of the *Restoration*, I had appointed to spend the first Sunday in April with them; and this engagement had been made sometime: Just as *I was ready to* go out of the city on Saturday, I

found that some of the members of the Church had privately sent into the country, and collected a number of the ablest ministers, who were arrived in the city on purpose to debate. I gave them the liberty of my pulpit as they pleased for the next day, and went out of the city to go to Germantown: and took that opportunity to go and visit that ancient, venerable, and excellent man, Dr. *George De Benneville*, who received me in the most kind, open, and friendly manner; and his conversation was most highly edifying to me. Afterwards I went to Germantown, and lodged there all night, ready to preach the next day. As soon as my enemies in Philidelphia found that I was gone out of the city, they spread a report that I had fled to avoid an interview with these ministers, who had come on purpose to convince me. Nothing could have been more false, than such a report, for I had been engaged to go to Germantown, on that day, for several weeks beforehand: I knew nothing of these ministers being sent for until they came to town; and I had no fear but I should be able, by God's assistance, to defend the cause before them; and besides, I had appointed to return on Monday, and did return accordingly. The whole church met, both my friends and my opposers, and these ministers met with them. I was called to attend a funeral at that time, and was at the house of mourning, when a messenger was sent in haste, to desire my immediate attendance at the meeting without any delay. I found that those who were my enemies in the assembly, had been greatly vaunting over my friends, because I was not present. They said

I had absconded merely to avoid a debate, in which I was sure to be confuted, as here was an opportunity that might never present itself again;—and seven wise, able, and learned ministers had assembled on purpose to dispute with me, but that I had gone, & left my adherents in the lurch, from a consciousness that I was not able to defend my cause;—with abundance more to the same purpose. My friends, on the other hand, told them, that I was afraid of nothing but sin, and that they doubted not of my being able and willing to dispute with any one of the gentlemen, or all of them, one by one, if they chose it. O, no; they replied, they knew better than that, I was gone out of the way on purpose, where I could not be found. My friends told them, that if there was a vote past in the assembly that I should dispute with any one, they would engage that I would be among them in a few minutes. It was accordingly unanimously voted, that I should dispute with the Rev. Mr. *Boggs*, upon my sentiments, in the presence of these ministers, and of the whole assembly. But when in a few minutes I came in, and took my place, what different countenances appeared in the congregation? All my friends were highly pleased, and the others were as much confounded and disappointed, at seeing me come in so cheefully and quickly, after they had made themselves so sure, that I would not come. But surely, I might have been looked upon with pity; alone to answer for my self, no one to support me; while my antagonists were seven of the ablest ministers that could be obtained.

I felt, however, that inward composure, from a consciousness of having acted uprightly and sincerely in the whole affair, that even caused my countenance to appear easy and cheerful.

The vote was then publicly read, and I stood up, and declared my readiness to comply with what was required. The worthy gentleman who was chosen to dispute with me, then rose up, and said these words, "I am not prepared to dispute with Mr. *Winchester*, I have heard that he says that it would take six weeks to canvass all the arguments fairly on both sides; and I suppose he has been studying upon the subject for a week or more, and I have not studied it at all; and therefore I must beg to be excused."

When I found that he, and all the rest wholly declined disputing with me, I begged liberty to speak for two hours upon my sentiments, and lay them fairly open, and the ground upon which I maintained them. But this was denied me; I then desired them to give me one hour for this purpose; but this was also refused. One of the ministers got up, and said, that their business was not to debate with me but to ask me, whether I believed the *Restoration* of bad men and angels finally, to a state of holiness and happiness, &c.

But if they did not come to dispute with me, why was the vote passed by their party, as well as by my friends, that I should dispute with them? This speaks for itself. The ministers insisted upon putting the question to me, do you believe the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration*? My friends objected to my answering the question, unless I might be allowed to vindicate my

sentiments. But I said, that I did not fear any use that could be made of my words ; that I had always freely confessed what my thoughts were when asked ; and, therefore, I told them, that I did heartily believe the *General Restoration*, and was willing to defend it. The gentleman that was chosen to dispute with me, then asked me, whether I thought it strange, considering my change of sentiments, that there should be such a noise and uproar made upon the occasion, &c. I told him that I did not think it strange at all ; and gave him a little history of the affair, and how the matter came abroad, through the treachery of some, whom I had esteemed as my friends; that when I mentioned it to them I was not fully persuaded of it myself, and perhaps never might have been, if I had not been opposed and threatened ; that I never had intended to trouble the people with my sentiments, but was willing to live and die with them, if they could bear with me ; but that I could not use so much deceit, as to deny what I believed, when asked by any one; that I never had yet done so, and by the grace of God never would, let the consequences be what they might. What I said was in presence of all my accusers, and none of them could contradict me, nor had aught to lay to my charge, except in this matter of the gospel of my Saviour. My discourse took such an effect upon him, that he then publicly declared, that my behaviour in the whole affair had been as became a *man* and a *Christian*, and that no one could accuse me of any improper conduct. I stood some time, and as none appeared to have any *thing* farther to say to me, I took my leave and

went out. He accompanied me to the door, and told me that he would write to me upon the subject; but whatever was the reason, he never did, nor have we spoken together since.

The ministers then advised the people to get another minister; but my friends being numerous, insisted it should be fairly determined by the subscribers at large; but this the other party would not agree to. Several very fair offers were made by my friends to them, but they refused them all; and finally, by force they kept us out of the house, and deprived us of our part of the property, which was at last confirmed to them by law, though I think unjustly, as we were the majority at first; but they took uncommon pains in carrying about a *protest* against me to every member of the church, both in the city and in the country, and threatening all with excommunication who would not sign it; by which some were intimidated, and by these and other means they strengthened their party. But on the other hand, I took no pains, either to proselyte people to believe my sentiments or to make my party strong. But I believe near an hundred of the members suffered themslevs to be excommunicated rather than to sign the *protest* against me, and the doctrine that I preached. When we were deprived of our house of worship, the *Trustees* of the *University* gave us the liberty of their Hall; where we worshipped God for about four years, until we purchased a place for ourselves. But to return. After this meeting of the ministers, the whole affair was open, and I found myself obliged to vindicate the doctrine which they had condemned unheard, not

only in private but in the pulpit. Accordingly, on the 22d day of April, I preached a sermon on Gen. iii. 15, in which I openly asserted the doctrine of the *Final* and *Universal Restoration* of all fallen intelligences. This was published by particular desire, with a list of the plainest scripture passages in favor of the doctrine; and a number of the most common and principal objections, fairly stated, and answered. This was my first appearance in the world as a *prose* writer, which was what I never expected to be, and probably should never have been but for this occasion; still less a writer of controversy, to which I had naturally a great aversion.

After I had preached this sermon, I had the *Chevalier Ramsey's Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* put into my hands; I read the same with great pleasure and advantage, and I must acknowledge it to be a work of great merit, and I have reason to bless God that ever I had an opportunity of reading it. I can heartily recommend it, as one of the best works in our language; and I must say, that in most things I fully agree with that very intelligent author. On the fourth of January, 1782, I preached the sermon called, *The Outcasts Comforted;* from Isaiah lxvi. 5, to my friends who had been cast out, and excommunicated, for believing this glorious doctrine. This was soon after printed, and the next year it was republished in London, by the Rev. Mr. Richard Clark, and was the first of my works ever printed here.

I have thus given a brief, plain and simple account of the means that have brought me to think *and write in* the manner that I have done, and

which account may be considered as an historical sketch of nearly four years of my life.

I have every year since printed and published something which I judged might be useful to my fellow creatures; but as my works are in the hands of most of my friends, it is not necessary to give a particular account of any of them here, except this book of *Dialogues on the Universal Restoration.* I have had many discourses with various persons upon this subject and many objections have been proposed to me, which I have endeavored to answer; and I can truly say, that these discourses, their questions and my answers, their objections, and my solutions, form the bulk of these dialogues. I have endeavored to give all the possible force to their objections, and if any of them are weak I can assure the public, that I have not made them so (as some have insinuated)merely that I might be able to answer them, but the weakest of them have been proposed to me, and I have fairly set down the most powerful that I ever heard, generally in the very words in which they were addressed to me, whether in conversation or by letter; and I am willing, if stronger objections can be made, to put them in the place of those things which I have set down, or add them to the number; and I have in this new edition added a few, which I have heard since the work was first published, and especially one which was sent me by a venerable minister from America, and which I have largely answered.

I have the satisfaction of knowing not only that these Dialogues have been well received, but that they have been the means of bringing

many persons to the belief of the truth of the *Universal Restoration*, and have strengthened and confirmed others, as will plainly appear from the following extracts of letters, which I have received from several ministers in different parts of the kingdom, since their publication.

Wisbich, October 26, 1788.

"DEAR SIR—

"I am persuaded your knowledge of the world and its inhabitants, hath long since taught you to be familiar with the addresses of persons unknown to you; and I have formed that opinion of you, that your candor will admit, and your generous mind rejoice to hear, that a person though unknown to you, is convinced that God hath gracious designs towards universal man. I am that person, sir. For sometime past I have entertained doubts with respect to the *eternity of hell torments*. My doubts principally arose from the consideration of the vast disproportion between *momentary crimes, committed in this short life* and the suffering *infinitude* of punishment; yet many difficulties lay in my way that I did not know how to remove, and I continued thus embarrassed, until a short time since I had the happiness to meet with your *Dialogues on the Universal Restoration*, which, I thank God, have helped me much. My ardent prayer is, that the truth may spread, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified.

"My good friend, Mr. F——, shewed me your letter to him, by which I see your readiness

to serve the cause of our great *Head*, Christ Jesus, and your willingness to visit the country, provided the way is open. Now, Sir, I can only say, that my house and my heart, and my pulpit will be all open to receive you, provided you will visit us in this part of the world.

"I remain, with the utmost respect,

"Dear Sir, your sincere friend,

"HENRY POOLE."

"DEAR SIR—

"Though personally unknown, have taken the liberty of addressing you with a few lines. I was lately in London, and called to see you: but was told you were out of town. Have for some time had the pleasure of reading your Dialogues much to my satisfaction.

"The subject of *Universal Restitution* has for many years engaged my thoughts at times, and often appeared in an amiable light to my mind. It is a subject that redounds to the everlasting honor of God, and the everlasting felicity of the rational creature, who, when delivered from misery, shall be fully sensible of the obligations due to the Deliverer, and consequently, shall naturally be engaged in the great and delightful work of praising and honoring both the Author and Accomplisher of the great salvation.

"My residence is at *Lyndhurst*, in the *New Forest Hants*, where I am pastor over a little Church of General Baptists, of which denomination I am informed you are; but be that as it may, it is no small pleasure to me to find men, of whatever denomination, vindicate the good-

ness of God, in the manner it is done by the doctrine of *Universal Restoration*.

"Should inclination or leisure ever favor your coming this way, I know not who I shall be more happy to see and enjoy. Permit me to subscribe myself,

"Your affectionate brother,

"In the gospel of universal love,

"ADAM ALDRIDGE.

"Lyndhurst, December 4, 1789."

"*York, March* 6, 1790.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—

"I hope you will excuse the freedom I have taken in writing to you.

"I have for several years embraced your sentiments, and have often stood up in defence of them.

"I have frequently met with learned and candid men, who have given me much satisfaction in this important subject. When your Dialogues were published, I procured and read them with the greatest avidity. I found the subject handled much to my mind. The strongest objections raised in all their weight and importance, and answered clearly and candidly. I read the book, over and over, with fresh pleasure and satisfaction. I studied the arguments, treasured them up in my memory, and determined to become a defender of this part of truth. My heart burnt in love to God and mankind. I found exalted views of God, raised exalted strains of gratitude and praise. It was one of the strongest and most attracting views that ever I met *with* since I knew the Saviour's love. I soon

entered the field, and was obliged to prove my armor against the strongest objections, backed with prejudices almost of an invincible nature. When I was hard put to it, I had recourse to your Magazine, and from thence brought forth new pieces of artillery. You will easily suppose I had many trials from persons of different dispositions. By persuading several of my acquaintance, ministers of the Gospel, to read over your book, I became an instrument of winning them over to the truth.

"One of my brethren in the ministry protested much against our notions, and declared he would never believe them. Knowing him to be a sensible man, and one who might be wrought upon by the force of truth properly stated, I used several arguments to persuade him to read the book. At length he consented, and said, that he would do it to oblige me, but was determined not to believe it. I told him, it would satisfy me, for him to give it a candid reading.

"When we met again, I began to inquire what he thought of the book. He paused a little, and then freely acknowledged the effect it had had upon him; he frankly declared that his resolution was just the same, as though he had resolved to look up to the heavens when the sun shone at noon, and not to believe that it shone. I have secretly engaged several and find when they are sensible, candid men, they fall in with your sentiments at once.

"I am acquainted with about half a score of ministers, who firmly believe and heartily embrace the doctrine; besides many private christians of different denominations. Most of us

ministers, who fall in with your sentiments
afraid of confessing them publicly for this
son, our people would thrust us out of the
gogues, and we and our families might
thereby. For my own part, I am determin
stand by this truth, whether I can continu
place among the people where I am or
Rather than give up this (through grace) I
give up life.

"I have so much zeal in my heart for the
firmation and establishment of this truth,
would, were it in my power, gladly prosely
men to embrace and enjoy the benefit of i

"I hope you will muster up all your r
tion, and stand forth boldly again in vindi
of the cause of truth, and the most glorio
most neglected part of that truth that all
ought to embrace. I fear lest the enemy
cause a shout of triumph if you refuse ag
engage, and do not come forth to the help
Lord against the mighty. Please to infor
if you want any help where you are; I
some little fortune, and would engage in pr
ing the work of God, without being wholl
pendent on any people.

"Direct to J. P. at Mr. *John Brown's*,
seller, *Pocklington*, *Yorkshire*.

"Sincerely praying for the success of
labors, and your welfare of body and mind

"I am in truth, your affectionate friend,

"And servant in CHRIST JESU

"*Aylesbury, September* 22, 1790.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—

An anxious desire of a more intimate acquaintance with you induces me to take this liberty of writing to you, hoping you will excuse my freedom; undoubtedly it will appear strange, that one you never saw nor heard of, should take such liberty. But as a foe to flattery, I just give you this short account of my first knowledge of you; which was only by hearing of the ear.

"Something more than a year ago, I was told that there was a preacher just come to London, an *American* by birth, who had undertaken to preach an *Universal Restoration* to lost souls. As it was new to me, I was much surprized at this strange account, and I thought and said, (though with some degree of candor) that I looked upon it to be some one that could not dig, and was ashamed to beg, so to procure a living he had written this book. Here I rested for some time, thinking that much hurt would be done thereby; till the last time I saw Mr. *Atkins*, (who I understand is now in connexion with you) he gave me some further account of you and your doctrine. But I could not understand it from his account; yet he persisted I should believe it, if I was to read your *Dialogues*. I told him I would give them a fair reading, if I could see them. Still I entertained the same strange idea as before. The next account I had was from a young man of *Berkhampstead*, who came to see me and in our discourse, I said, "Some of your people have imbibed a new doctrine, I hear." He said "Yes, and I verily believe it a

truth." I was now more surprized than before; but he said, if I was to see it he had no doubt but I should believe it also.—"Well," said I, "if I could see the book I would lay prejudice aside, and give it a fair reading, let it be what it may." He very kindly told me, that as soon as he could get it home, (for he had lent it to a friend) he would send it to me. I thanked him, and promised to read it impartially, knowing that where party spirit reigns, blindness takes place.

"According to promise, he sent the book; and as I had done before, I now laid the matter before the Lord with this petition, that he would not suffer me to be misled or wander out of the way, as I knew that he knew my desire and intention. I was delivered from fear, and with candor and cofidence I began to read my new book, and to my great astonishment, yet to my greater joy, I found what I had many times wished for secretly in my heart, namely, the possibility of a release for those poor sufferers, and not only so, but likewise the certainty of it; for as I read on, I could not but see, that it was the determination of JEHOVAH to make all men, as his creatures, happy in himself. O with what eyes did I now view the Deity, and what ideas did I entertain of him to what I had ever done before! (though I was on the general plan,) O how my soul was filled with love! what gratitude did I feel to that God, who I now saw so loved all creatures, as to give his only Son to die, with a pure design to glorify himself in the salvation of every soul! I now saw him a God of love indeed, but it is out of my power to tell fully the happy effect it had, and has now upon my mind;

but it is something, what I experienced, when the Lord first set my soul at liberty; as I was then swallowed up, as in the vision of God. But the bigness of this sheet is not sufficient to tell you all I could wish, but I trust I shall see you in person, as I should esteem it a privilege indeed to hear you preach, and to converse with you, and I fully intended coming to London about last May, on purpose, but as I had already a large family, which, through the blessing of God, I maintain with my labor; finding it likely to increase, I could not well spare time to come, or I had been with you at that season, as I had nothing else in my way to hinder. Mr. *John Holder*, of *Tring*, an acquaintance of mine, has lent me a few little tracts of yours, which I am now reading with pleasure and profit, and he has kindly offered himself to accompany me at any time that I shall appoint to come and see you, but the same difficulty is now in the way as before. If ever Providence should open a way, I shall gladly embrace the opportunity.

Though I have no doubt of the doctrine of the *Restoration*, as to myself, I have never spoke of it in public as yet, not knowing whether that may be the way to make this glorious salvation known; but I have spoke to several of the people in private, those whom I judged to have the best understanding, and the most candor; and most of these seem to be glad at the news, and my own wife in particular receives it with all thankfulness, and joins with me in love to you and yours. (Though very ill at this time.) If it will not be attended with too much trouble, please to send me your *Dialogues*, bound, by the *Aylesbury* stage-

coach. I have given the coachman an order to pay the expense. As I stand like yourself (in this respect) unconnected with any party, (though I was with Mr. *Wesley's* people twelve years,) I am now free, I trust, from bigotry and prejudice, open to conviction, and willing for instruction. A few lines from you will be gratefully acknowledged, and thankfully received, by your affectionate, though most unworthy, may I say, brother in Christ,

"THOMAS HIGGINS."

"P. S. I pray God of his mercy to give you all the wisdom that you need, to make this great salvation more fully known, as I believe he hath raised you up for this purpose, and that a double portion of his Spirit may rest upon you, and that your labors may be crowned with more abundant success, till the Son of righteousnes is seen in his full strength, and with all his ability to save.

"Direct to *Thomas Higgins, Aylesbury Bucks.*"

I take the liberty of publishing these Letters, with the names and places of abode of the writers, as a kind of beginning of that general acquaintance, which I should wish to see take place among all the friends of this doctrine in these kingdoms. I know several other ministers in England, who believe and preach the *Universal Restoration*, and I trust their numbers will increase. In America, where I once stood almost in these views alone, (among those who

speak the English tongue) there are now many who testify this Gospel of the free universal grace of God, and they have formed a connexion of societies on this plan, who meet by their representatives in convention yearly, at *Philadelphia*, and I could wish a plan of the same nature might be adopted in this country. If any thing that I have spoken or written may be of use to my fellow creatures, and may tend to promote the glory of God, and the interest of the dear Redeemer in the world, I shall have the satisfaction to reflect, that I have not wholly lived in vain.

LONDON, April 2, 1792.

DIALOGUE I.

OBJECTION.—That the words *everlasting, eternal, &c.*, are applied to the punishment of the wicked.

ANSWER.—These words are but seldom applied to the misery of the wicked; being connected therewith only twice in the Old Testament, and but six times in the New; and are full as often connected with things and times that certainly have had, or will have an end, as they are with the misery of the wicked, &c.

OBJECTION.—But the words *forever and ever*, are applied to the misery of the wicked, &c.

ANSWER.—This is a very strong phrase, and would be judged unanswerable, but for certain considerations.

1. If the phrase *forever and ever* intends any period or periods, longer than the word *forever*, then there must be a proportion, &c. 2. This phrase as applied to future misery cannot intend *endless duration*. 3. It is more than probable that the lake of fire, in which the wicked will be punished with the second death, will be the earth dissolved by the general coflagration, &c.

OBJECTION.—*Forever* when applied to things of this life and world may end, but being applied to things of another state *must* mean *endless*.

ANSWER.—The word *forever* applied to spiritual things, and circumstances of another state must not be always understood to mean *endless*.

OBJECTION.—But does not the phrase *forever and ever*, in the New Testament, always intend *endless*?

ANSWER.—It doth not. An undeniable instance brought in proof, to which several more might have been added.

OBJECTION.—But is not the Scripture chargeable with a design to mislead men in these words when applied to future misery, unless they intend *endless duration*? And does not the limiting these words accuse Christ of duplicity and deceit in his threatenings?

ANSWER.—The Hebrew word rendered *everlasting* properly intends a *hidden duration*, or period, but not *endless*.

OBJECTION.—The same word *everlasting* or *eternal* is in the very same verse applied both to the misery of the wicked and to the happiness of the righteous.

ANSWER.—The very same word is in other places applied to very different things, whose natures and durations are entirely dissimilar.

OBJECTION.—But, upon the supposition that the doctrine of *endless damnation* was true, in what manner might one expect it to be expressed in the Bible?

ANSWER.—If it was true, there could be no promises, intimations, or even distant hints to the contrary. And it is therefore shewn to be false by a number of positive proofs. If there were not promises and intimations of the *General Restoration* in the Scripture, the doctrine of endless

damnation might be then concluded to be true, however dark; but the *endless happiness* of the righteous is set forth in much stronger language, and with more abundant force of expression.

The *endless* happiness of the righteous stands upon such foundations that can never be overthrown or destroyed; such as their indissoluble union with the original source of life and happiness; their being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and the promise that they shall live because he lives; and his life is truly *endless*.

OBJECTION.—That since the wicked have chosen evil, persevered in it through life, it is become a fixed habit in them, from which it would seem as impossible to reclaim them, as to draw off the just from their attachment to God and goodness.

ANSWER.—This reasoning is founded upon the old pagan system of good and evil being two eternal co-existing principles.

All men are God's creatures, and therefore he will not contend forever, nor be always wroth with the souls that he hath made.

Satan's kingdom and all evil shall be destroyed, and therefore *endless misery* cannot have the same permanent foundation as *endless happiness*.

Two things diametrically opposite to each other cannot both exist together to all eternity.

OBJECTION.—But does not the word *all* frequently intend a part only?

ANSWERED.—By giving certain never failing rules, whereby it may be known when the word *all* means strictly *all*, or the whole universally without any exception; confirmed by plain instances out of St. Paul's writings.

OBJECTION.—That perhaps by *all* things being put under Christ, nothing farther may be meant than their being brought into a state of forced subjection, or made subject to his control.

ANSWER.—They are now put under him in this respect, but they are not yet put under him in the sense that they shall be, which implies a state of willing subjection.

The word *many* frequently means *all.*

All things were *created* by Christ; all rebellious beings shall be *subdued* by him, and all without exception shall be *reconciled* by him, and through him, to God.

DIALOGUE II.

OBJECTION.—Of the worm that dieth not, and the unquenchable fire, five times threatened by our Lord Jesus Christ in one passage.

ANSWERED.—By reference to the words in the prophesy of Isaiah, to which our Lord probably alluded.

Passages from the prophets brought to shew a literal accomplishment of the original words.

The dreadful threatenings of future misery to the wicked, implied in those words of our Saviour. They shall be publicly punished and tormented in the lake of fire, which is the earth in its melted or dissolved state.

Nevertheless, there shall be a new creation of the earth, and so the lake of fire shall cease.

Many instances of fires mentioned in Scripture, of which it was said, *they shall not be quenched*, which yet have ceased long ago.

And of those fires whose smoke is said to ascend up *forever.*

Things contrary are often predicted
same places and people, and must be unc
as occurring at different times.

Our Lord's words of every one bein
with fire considered.

OBECTION.—All the fires above me
were on earth, and in time; but the fire
being in eternity, can never go out, or c
burn to all endless duration.

ANSWER:—Those fires on earth that we
to be quenched did not continue to burn
as the earth remained; and therefore the
necessity of granting that the fire of he
burn to all eternity.

Punishments belong only to the ages c
before Christ shall have delivered up the
dom to the Father.

OBJECTION.—The blasphemy against t
ly Ghost shall never be forgiven, &c.

ANSWERED.—1. By shewing what this
&c. 2. All that bears the name of *deat*
be destroyed, and all sorrow, crying, anc
shall cease and be no more. 3. Where
bounded grace shall much more abound.

OBJECTION.—The deplorable case of E

ANSWER.—He lost the birthright, and t
culiar privileges that belonged to the first
but yet he had a blessing from his fathe
lower degree.

The great difference between them wa
fulfilled in their posterity than in their ow
sons.

Love and hatred are sometimes only co
ative, and not positive terms, and only in
preference of one to the other.

OBJECTION.—The great gulph between the region of happiness and misery is impassable.

ANSWER.—Christ has passed it when he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were disobedient in the days of Noah.

This proves a state of conscious existence after the death of the body.

The rich man seems to have had compassion towards his brethren.

The scriptures constantly hold out punishment in proportion to the sins committed in the present life.

OBJECTION.—The case of Judas, of whom Jesus said, "Good were it for that man that he had never been born."

ANSWER.—1. This was a proverbial saying. 2. Both Job and Jeremiah cursed the day of their birth, and wished they had never been born. 3. Solomon declares an untimely birth to be far better than the longest and most prosperous life of one whose soul is not filled with good, and who hath no burial. 4. If Judas had died before he was born he would have escaped all earthly trouble, and future misery, and would have been immediately happy. 5. The Jews as much rejected and doomed to woe as Judas.

DIALOGUE III.

OBJECTION.—That the doctrine of the Restoration tends to licentiousness, and is calculated to encourage the wicked to a continuance in their evil ways, &c.

ANSWER.—*First*, by shewing the principles upon which the doctrine of the Restoration is founded. 1. God is the Creator of all. 2. His

benevolence is universal. 3. Christ died for
without exception.

OBJECTION.—That Christ did not die for
because he did not pray for all.

ANSWER.—This objection is entirely grou
less;—for though in one place he prays ex
sively for his apostles, yet a little after he pr
for all that should believe on him, through th
word, &c. 4. Another of the first principles
which the doctrine of the Universal Restorat
is founded, is the unchangeableness of God.
The immutability of his counsels; cofirmed
his oath. 6. That God hath given all things
to the hands of Christ, and that nothing that
given to him shall be lost. 7. That the Sc
tures must be fulfilled, and that none of th
can be broken.

Secondly, It is proved that the doctrine of
Restoration cannot lead to licentiousness,
cause it is perfectly consistent with experime
religion.—Queries asked upon this subject.
little sketch of the author's experience. Q
ies submitted to the consideration of all ex
ienced Christians. Inference deduced th
from in favor of the doctrine of the Restorat

Thirdly, It is proved, that the doctrine of
Restoration does not lead to licentiousness,
its tendency to practical religion. 1. We
commanded to love all mankind, even our
mies. 2. To do good to all. 3. To forgive
that trespass against us. 4. To pray for all n
that they may be saved and come to the kn
edge of the truth.

The belief of the Restoration so far from
venting us from these things, enables us to

form them with pleasure and consistency.

All shall be restored at last by the blood of Christ.

Fourthly, It is proved, that the doctrine of the Restoration is according to godliness, because the belief of it tends to fill our hearts with all amiable tempers, &c.

Fifthly, The doctrine of the Restoration is vindicated from the charge of licentiousness, by an appeal to facts, especially by the amiable conduct of the *Tunkers*, or German Baptists, in America, who universally hold these sentiments.

Reply to those who call this the doctrine which Satan taught Eve in the Garden.

Dr. *Whitby's* grand objection, that the unbeliever shall not see life, answered.

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of endless punishment said to be the strongest possible restraint upon sin.

ANSWERED.—1. By showing that God doth not always lay the greatest possible restraint upon sin. 2. The idea of limited punishment by appearing more just and reasonable to the mind, is more calculated to restrain sin & iniquity than the doctrine of endless misery. 3. That in fact, though the greater part have professed to believe endless damnation, yet their belief appears not to have much restrained them from sin. 4. The great number of heathen people that die without ever hearing the gospel, infants, idiots, persons born deaf, &c. render it probable that many are reclaimed in a future state. 5. That the intention of God is not so much to restrain sin, as to show its enormity; and finally to destroy it out of the universe. 6. If the doctrine of the Restoration should be abused, that can be no argu-

nt against it, as the gospel itself has been p
rted, yet is the greatest blessing to manki
herefore it is evident that this glorious doctr
annot justly be charged with the least tende
owards licentiousness.

OBJECTION.—It would not be prudent in G
even if he intended finally to restore the wic
to let them know his gracious designs bef
hand; it is time enough to let them know
gracious purposes towards them, when his
mer threatenings have failed of their effect,
not before.

ANSWERED.—God has thought it the abou
ing of his wisdom and prudence to make kno
to his saints this mystery of his will, even
promise to rehead all things in Christ. T
discovery is chiefly intended for the comfort
satisfaction of the good, and not for the enco
agement of the bad.

God has frequently mixed promises of g
mercies with threatenings of terrible judgm
yet his threatenings are not thereby weake

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of the Resto
seems not very plainly revealed in the Scr
or it would not have been so long hidde
so many great and good men.

ANSWER.—Things that have been pla
vealed, have been still hidden from gr
good men; as the death and resurre
Christ.

QUESTION.—But how comes this ma
better than all the world? &c.

ANSWER.—The charge denied. M
known, believed, preached and defend

The doctrine of endless misery is

pal cause of the disagreement among Christians.

DIALOGUE IV.

OBJECTION.—Christ threatens the Jews that they should die in their sins, and that they could not come whither he went.

ANSWER.—Our Lord told his disciples themselves that whither he went, they could not come, that is, then, as afterwards explained.

2. There are blessings promised in scripture, to all Israel, without exception.

3. Those that have been rejected and cast off shall at last return and be received.

OBJECTION.—That the blessings promised only respect to those that shall be found alive on the earth at a certain time.

ANSWER.—The inhabitants of Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem, with their daughters, or neighboring cities, shall all be restored, though destroyed long ago.

2. That all things are given to Christ without exception; and that all that are given shall at last come to him in such a manner as not to be cast out. From which promises, the Universal Restoration is inferred, and proved to be certainly true.

OBJECTION.—God sware in his wrath that the Israelites should not enter into his rest.

ANSWER.—The rest was the land of Canaan, being typical of the time of the Millennium, or Christ's reign on earth, and not of the ultimate state of happiness.

OBJECTION.—There are some of whom we read, that he that made them will not have mer-

cy upon them, and he that formed them will shew them no favor.

ANSWER.—These words must necessarily be understood with some limitation, and refer to a particular season, when they shall have judgment without mercy, but finally mercy shall rejoice against judgment.

OBJECTION.—That the wicked shall never see light.

ANSWER.—Not until subdued, or overcome, as the words ought to be rendered.

OBJECTION.—A great ransom cannot deliver those who are taken away by the stroke of God.

ANSWER.—The great ransom cannot intend the blood of Christ, the power of which is unlimited, but gold, and all the forces of strength, riches, wisdom, &c. none of these can deliver their possessors from death.

OBJECTION.—Solomon says, that there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave; and that in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

ANSWER.—The first part of this objection respects only the state of the body in the grave, but cannot be brought to disprove the consciousness of the soul in a separate state, the resurrection of the body, a future state of existence, or the final Restoration.

The second part of this objection has not the least relation to the subject; but belongs to quite another matter.

OBJECTION.—The living have hope, but the dead have none, their love, hatred, envy, &c. are perished.

ANSWER.—This belongs to the present life, and to the state of the body in the grave, but forms no objection against the Restoration.

OBJECTION.—Our Saviour has said, the night cometh when no man can work.

ANSWER.—Our Lord was diligent in his work, and we ought to be so in our labors on earth, to which death will put an end.

OBJECTION.—Many terrible passages of Scripture brought to prove the destruction and future misery of the wicked.

ANSWER.—The Scriptures are an unanswerable objection to those who deny a future state of retribution, but not so to the scriptural doctrine of the general Restoration.

QUESTION.—But does not punishment harden and inflame, instead of softening and subduing the criminals?

ANSWER.—Punishment to a certain degree produces the former effects, but in greater degrees and longer continued, produces the latter.

OBJECTION.—The deplorable state of wicked men, their aversion to good, their love of vice, their hardness of heart, and opposition to every method taken to reclaim them, seems to render their Restoration an event hardly to be hoped for.

ANSWER.—However difficult it may be for our reason to admit the possibility of such monsters of iniquity being changed and restored, yet nothing is too hard for God, and therefore faith may lay hold on his promises, which he hath graciously given us for our encouragement.

OBJECTION.—There will come a time when the characters of all men will be so fixed and

confirmed, that no change can afterwards t place upon them. He that is unjust let him unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be fil still, &c.

ANSWERED.—1. By considering the words belonging to a certain period, and by the c sideration of many other scriptural passages a like import. 2. By comparison; as even most holy creatures are unclean, compared w God, so those who remain filthy and uncle during the present life, may be so esteen hereafter, in comparison of those holy so who have purged themselves from all uncle ness here, shall be reckoned as vessels of highest honor in the house of God.

OBJECTION.—Those who add or diminish sl have the plagues added to them, or their part ken out of the book of life, &c.

ANSWER.—This is no objection to the gen al Restoration, but is a solemn warning for u take heed that we do not fall under those dre ful punishments which await unbelievers profane persons, nor lose those inestimable bl ings which Christ has promised to the faith obedient, overcomers, &c.

The reflections cast upon the doctrine of Restoration by its opponents shewn to be hig absurd.

The doctrine of annihilation considered.

There can be but three things possible; e less misery, total annihilation, or the Rest tion.

The doctrine of annihilation, or a final st of non-existence, proved unscriptural. 1. the wicked being actually tormented for a l

season, ages of ages. 2. Because they are destroyed, not that they might cease to exist any more, but that they might come to know the Lord. 3. By the unexceptionable instance of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. who were so long ago destroyed, and yet shall have their captivity returned.

The promises made respecting Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. prove the doctrines of annihilation and endless misery, both to be erroneous and the restoration alone to be true.

An objection taken from Mr. B——'s sermon that sinners in hell, will be always under the necessity of committing fresh sin, therefore God will be obliged to continue their punishment to all eternity.

ANSWERED.—The objection unscriptural, merely a rash conjecture, totally unfounded.

The scripture represents future punishment as the reward of sins committed in this world.

Their intention is to destroy sin, and consequently will cause it to cease from being committed.

Whatever rage punishments may at first seem to provoke, they must continue until the most rebellious are entirely subdued.

The last objection. That sin is infinite, being against an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulness, and justly deserves infinite punishment; and which cannot be fully executed, and therefore endless misery must be their portion.

This unscriptural, unreasonable, trite objection largely answered. 1. By shewing the absurdity of ascribing infinite actions to creatures. 2. Acts of the highest goodness do not extend

to God, cannot be infinite, much less can evil actions be infinite. 3. Though iniquities are once in Scripture styled infinite, yet it is evident from the whole passage compared with other parts of Scripture, that infinite is only used for a great multitude. 4. The idea of every sin being absolutely infinite, and deserving infinite punishment or endless misery, entirely confounds and destroys all the different kinds and degrees of sin, and all those distinctions which God hath made and revealed to us in the Scriptures. 5. God threatens to punish sinners for all their sins; and to render their sin and iniquity double upon them: and yet promises to be gracious to them after all, &c. 6. Even allowing that sin is naturally infinite, and deserves infinite punishment, that will not prove that any of the human race must be miserable without end, &c.

Eight reasons given why the author sometimes treats in public upon the doctrine of the Universal Restoration.

Eleven reasons mentioned why the author doth not speak of it more frequently and fully in his public discourses.

FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A

MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND.

DIALOGUE I.

Friend. I have taken the freedom to call upon you, to have a little discourse with you concerning the doctrine of *the Restoration of all Things*, which it is said you believe; and to propose some objections.

Minister. I am happy to see you, and am willing to discourse, as well as I am able, upon any subject that may be agreeable; but I have always made it a rule never to press the belief of my sentiments upon my friends; and I can safely say, that, though such great pains have been taken by my adversaries, to predjudice people against me, I have never gone about from house to house to propagate my opinions; and I make it a universal rule not to introduce the subject in conversation, unless desired; but yet I never have refused to own my sentiments, when asked, respecting the matter; and am ready, in the fear of God, to answer any objections that can be made, to a doctrine which I believe is plainly revealed in the Scriptures of truth, and appears to me worthy of God.

Friend. I shall first of all bring to view that grand objection, which is formed from the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, being applied to a future state of punishment; as in the following passages: Isaiah xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with *everlasting* burnings.

Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting* life, and some to shame and *everlasting* contempt."

St. Matt. xviii. 8. "Wherefore, if thine hand or thy foot offend thee (or cause thee to offend) cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting* fire."

St. Matt. xxv. 41. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Verse 46, "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into life *eternal* or *everlasting*." The same word in the original being used for both, though varied by the translators.

St. Mark, iii. 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness; but is in danger of *eternal* damnation."

2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished

with *everlasting* destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Judge, 6, 7. "And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in *everlasting* chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day: even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over unto fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire."

These texts, together, form such an objection to the doctrine of the Restoration, that I can by no means believe it, unless this can be fairly answered, and proofs brought from the Scriptures to shew, that the words *everlasting* and *eternal*, (which are translations of the same word and synonymous) being connected with the punishment of the wicked, and their future misery, do not necessarily imply the continuance of the same while God exists.

Minister. I am glad that you have so fairly and fully stated the matter; and I highly commend your resolution, not to believe the *universal doctrine*, unless this can be answered fully, without any torturing or twisting the Scriptures; and if I am not able with God's assistance, to remove this difficulty, I will publicly recant my sentiments.

But, before I come to give a direct answer, I would beg leave to remark how very seldom this word is used to express the duration of punishment. We should think, by some sermons we hear, that *everlasting* is applied to misery in every book of the New Testament, if not in eve-

ry chapter. A friend of mine told me, was once preaching in Maryland, and a mon a man came and asked him, of w nomination he was? To which he an a Baptist. I think, says the man, that not preach up so much *everlasting damn* the Baptists and Methodists among us which my friend replied, *everlasting d* is found in the Scripture. True, answ man; but some preachers give us more one sermon than is to be found in the w ble. The truth of this remark will appe consider that St. Luke, never uses the w *ion* or *everlasting*, as connected with the r the wicked, in his gospel; nor St. Mark b and then in a particular case only. In pel of St. John, it is not to be found at a connexion, nor in any of his epistles account of the preaching of the apostles the world, in the first age of christianity not find it mentioned, in that light, so m once: no, not in all the sermons, and sermons, which St. Luke has preserve book of the Acts: though the doctrine of *ing damnation* is the substance of many discourses. St. Paul never mentions *ing destruction* but once, though his form such a considerable part of the Ne tament. Neither are such words found epistle of St. James, or in those of St and but three times in the gospel of S thew: and only twice in all the Old Te But was the word *aionion* applied to mi once in the whole Bible, it would deser rious consideration; and unless the for

can be removed by the authority of the Scriptures, it must remain an unanswerable objection. But I shall proceed to answer it, by bringing an equal number of passages where the word *everlasting* is applied to *things* and *times*, that have had, or must have, an end. As in the following passages: Gen. xvii. 7, 8. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession; and I will be their God." Verse 13. "He that is born in thy house, and bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting* covenant."

Here note that the land of Canaan is called an *everlasting* possession; and the covenant of circumcision in the flesh, an *everlasting* covenant, though it is certain that the land of Canaan, as well as the other parts of the earth must be dissolved or melted, in the general conflagration; and *circumcision* is now declared null and void by the Holy Ghost; and the ceremony cannot endure to endless ages.

Of the same kind are the following passages: Gen. xlviii 3, 4. "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me: and said unto me, behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an *everlasting* possession." And

in the blessing of Joseph he says, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound, of the *everlasting* hills." By which, I suppose, the hills of the land of Canaan were meant.

God saith to Moses, Exod. xl. 15. "And thou shalt annoint them (Aaron's sons) as thou didst annoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; for their annointing shall surely be an *everlasting* priesthood, throughout their generations." Lev. xvi, 34. "And this shall be an *everlasting* statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins, once a year; and he did as JEHOVAH commanded Moses."

The apostle declares, that these *everlasting* ordinances were only *till the time of Reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. and this *everlasting* priesthood of Aaron's son, had ceased long ago: "For the priesthood being changed (by Christ) there is, of necessity a change also of the law: for he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of whom no man gave attendance at the altar: for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident, for that, after the similitude of Melchisedek, there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: for he testifieth that, thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek: for there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness

thereof." Heb. vii. 12, 18. The whole sum of the apostle's argument, in this epistle, tends to prove that the *everlasting* ordinance is now no more; and the *everlasting* priesthood of Aaron and his sons is now abolished.

Another passage where the word *everlasting* is evidently used in a limited sense, is Numb. xxv. 11, 12, 13, where we read thus: "Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood: because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

If the word *everlasting* intends *endless duration*, how shall we be able to reconcile this promise with the total cessation of the Levitical Priesthood? As for the family of Phinehas, with whom this covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood was made, it was entirely deprived of the benefit of the same, within the space of four hundred years: for when the sons of Eli transgressed the covenant, by profaning it, God sent him word, that as they had broken it on their parts, it was entirely, and to all intents and purposes, dissolved. Read 1. Sam. ii. from the beginning of the 12th verse to the end of the 17th, and from the 27th to the end of the chapter: and also, chap. iii. 11,12, 13, 14.

I will transcribe verse 30, of the second chapter in proof of my point. "Wherefore JEHOVAH, God of Israel, saith, I said indeed, that thy

house, and the house of thy father should w
before me *for ever:* but now JEHOVAH saith,
it far from me, for them that honor me, I
honor; and they that despise me, shall be ligh
esteemed." Hophini, and Phinehas, were s
after slain in one day; and Saul the King of Isr
sent Doag the Edomite, who fell upon
priests and slew fourscore and five persons, v
wore a linen ephod, in one day. "And Nob,
city of the priests, smote he with the edge of
sword; both men, and women, and children,
suclings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, w
the edge of the sword." 1 Sam. xxii. 19. T
whole house of Phinehas seems to have been
stroyed at this time except Abiather; and wh
Solomon came to the throne he thrust him
from being priest, "that he might fulfil the w
of JEHOVAH, which he spake concerning
house of Eli, in Shiloh," 1 Kings, ii. 27. Fr
this time the house of Ithamar had the pri
hood.

It is so evident that the word which is tra
lated *everlasting*, cannot in the nature of thir
absolutely signify, *without end*, that I should
think it worth while to quote any more pas
ges in proof of its intending *age* or *ages*, or
were it not constantly used as a great object
against the universal Restoration; I shall, the
fore, instance two or three more in particular
this place, and refer to a great number of c
ers, of the same kind; all tending to prove
same thing. Hab. iii. 6, "The *everlasting* mo
tains were scattered, the *perpetual hills* did bo
The gospel is called "The *everlasting* gospe
Rev. xiv. 6, yet it must cease to be preach

when it shall be needed no longer. Jonah saith, "The earth with her bars was about me *forever;* yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption; O JEHOVAH, my God." Jonah ii. 6. But it would be the highest absurdity upon the supposition that the word *Legnolam*, here rendered *forever*, properly signifies *without end*, for him to say, that his life was brought up from corruption; and, therefore, we know that he could not use it in that sense, because, on the third day, he was delivered from his dreadful prison. There is no doubt but the time that he was there, seemed an age, and, while he was thus shut up, there was no intermission to the darkness, and distress that overwhelmed him; and, therefore he might say, with propriety, that earth, with her bars was about him, forever (i. e. *perpetually without cessation*) during the period he remained in the fish's belly; which appeared to him, as a long age indeed. But, as it would be a work of much time and labor to mention all the passages where the word translated *forever*, evidently intends only an age, or period, I shall just direct you to the following; which you may look over at your leisure.

Gen. xiii. 15. xliii. 9. xliv. 32.—Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24. xxi. 6. xxvii. 21. xxviii. 43. xxix. 9, 28. xxx. 21. xxxi. 16, 17. xxxii. 13.—Lev. iii. 17. vi. 13, 18, 20, 22. vii. 34, 36. x. 9, 15. xvi. 29, 31. xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41. xxiv. 3. xxv. 30, 46.—Numb. x. 8. xv. 15. xviii. 8, 19. xix. 10.—Deut. iv. 40. xv. 17. xviii. 5, 28, 46.—Josh. iv. 7. xiv. 9.—1 Sam. ii. 30. iii. 13. xxvii. 12. xxviii. 2.—1 Kings, xii. 7.—2 Kings, v. 27.—2 Chronicles, x. 7.

Here are more than fifty passages, where the word rendered *for ever* intends only *age*, or *ages;* to which many more might be added.

Now the rule for understanding words is this: —What *must* be the meaning of the word, in *many* places, and what *may* be the meaning in *all ;* is the true sense of the same.

Friend. Although the single word *forever*, in these passages, seems evidently to intend certain unknown *limited* periods ; yet what can you do with those texts that say, the misery of the wicked shall endure *for ever and ever.*

Minister. Indeed they are terrible threatnings; and no doubt will be fully executed.

Friend. But, do you imagine that such passages as the following can intend less than *endless misery* ? Rev. xiv. 11. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up, *for ever and ever ;* and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. xix. 3. "And here smoke rose up *for ever and ever.*" Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil, that deceiveth them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, *for ever and ever.*"

Minister. I confess you have proposed a difficulty that I should judge to be unanswerable, were it not for the following considerations :

1st. If *forever and ever* is a longer time than *forever*, which must be granted ; then is there some proportion between them : thus, if *forever* intends an *age*, *period*, or sometimes *ages ; forever and ever*, may intend *ages*, an *age* of *ages* :

but any *proportion* at all between two periods supposes both *to have an end*, or there could *be no proportion.*

2dly. I find a time promised, when, "there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are (or shall then be) passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me (John) write; for these words are true and faithful." Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

3dly. I think there is sufficient reason, from the words of St. Peter, in his second epistle, 3d chapter, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12th verses, to conclude, that as the earth was once overflowed with water, and became truly a lake of water, wherein the world of ungodly men perished; so, by the general conflagration, the same shall become literally the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the wicked shall be punished after the day of judgment: but I also think, that the 13th verse of the same chapter, compared with Rev. xxi. 1. Isaiah lxv. 17. lxvi. 22, more than intimates, that the new heaven and earth shall be created out of the substance of the old, dissolved by the fire; that the *new earth* shall no more have a *sea* therein, seems to imply, that in its former state, it had a sea, or why this expression, "and there was no *more* sea."—Now, if this hypothesis is right, the following will be the true state of the case, viz.

The lake of fire is expressly declared to be "the second death," Rev. xx. 14. The earth, in its burnt, melted and dissolved state, will be the general lake of fire and brimstone accord-

ing to the verses above cited from St. Peter. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, created out of the substance of the old, in which there will be no more sea, either of water, or of liquid fire; consequently the lake of fire, or second death, (which are declared to be synonymous) must end; and, of course, the punishment of the second death must then cease.

4thly. The *smoke* of their torments is to ascend up *for ever and ever*, and they are to be tormented day and night. But, as the smoke of their burning earth must cease, when its substance is entirely dissolved or melted, and all combustible bodies are consumed; and as it is intimated in Job xxvi. 10, that day and night shall come to an end; and in Rev. xxi. 25, it is said of the New Jerusalem, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." For all these reasons, I cannot be altogether persuaded, that their being tormented *day and night*, *forever and ever*, during which time the smoke of their torment shall constantly ascend, is quite equal to *endless misery*, especially as there shall come a time when *death* shall be no more, *pain* shall be no more, *sorrow* shall be no more, *smoke* shall probably ascend no more, and peradventure, *night* shall be no more.

5thly. But the great reason of all, why I do not conceive that *forever and ever*, doth certainly intend *endless duration*, is because I find the words as often used for *times* and *periods*, that must have an end, as you find them used for the misery of the wicked.—You bring three passages, which are all that are to be found in the

whole Bible, where they are used in that sense; I shall now invalidate those evidences for *endless damnation*, by bringing an equal number of texts where you will allow the words are used in a limited sense.

Friend. Is it possible that you can find any such passages in the Bible? Pray shew them to me.

Minister. Isa. xxx. 8. "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, *forever and ever.*"

See Jer. vii. 1, 7. The 7th verse is, "Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, *forever and ever.*"

Jer. xxv. 5. "Turn ye again, now, every one from his evil way, and every one from the evil of your doing, and dwell in the land that JEHOVAH hath given unto you, and to your fathers, *for ever and ever.*"

These passages are as many, and as strongly expressed, as those which you brought to prove *endless misery;* and yet nothing can be more evident than that they cannot intend *endless duration.* Here, these periods must be limited by the great conflagration; and thus (for ought that appears as yet) the misery of the wicked *may* be *limited*, notwithstanding the use of those expressions, to set forth its dreadful continuance to unknown ages; at least, those words do not necessarily imply, that they shall never, as long as God lives, be delivered from their sins and consequent sufferings.

If we were always to read *for ever and ever*, endless, we should set the scriptures at variance; and no criticism could ever reconcile them. Try, for instance, to reconcile Psalm cii. 25, 26, with Psalm cxlviii. 6. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. He hath also established them *forever and ever;* he hath made a decree which shall not pass."

Now, if the words *forever and ever* signify *without end*, then there is a contradiction that cannot be reconciled; but only understand them *ages of ages*, (as, indeed, they ought to be rendered) and the whole difficulty vanishes at once.

Suppose a person should read Rev. xx. 11. and xxi. 1. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea:" and should then say, these visions cannot be true, because Solomon hath said, "One generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth *for ever.*" Eccl. i. 4. "And God laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed, *for ever*," Psalm civ. 4. "The world also is established that it cannot be moved." Psalm xciii. 1. See also Psalm lxxviii, 69. and xcvi. 10, What would you think of such reasoning? Just so weak, must all the reasoning against the universal Res-

toration be, from the words *for ever* and *for ever and ever*, being applied to states of future misery, if God had promised to put an end to them all, by reconciling all things to himself, destroying sin, and introducing a new creation, and a state of universal and permanent happiness: for if such promises really exist, and their existence can be demonstrated, all reasoning against them must be vain and futile.

Friend. It is certain, that when the word *forever* is applied to things of this life and the world, it intends *a period;* but when applied to spiritual matters, and things of another world, it must be *endless*, according to my judgment; and I am apt to think, you will find it so too.

Minister. I am certain that you will soon be convinced to the contrary. The apostle, speaking of Christ, says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Heb. x. 12, 13. You will please to notice, that Christ's sitting down in the heavens, on the right hand of God, is not a circumstance belonging to *this world* or *the things of time;* and he is to set there *for ever;* and yet that period, which, according to your hypothesis, must be *endless*, is expressly limited by the sacred writings. The heavens have received him, "until the times (seasons, or ages) of restitution of all things," (that is till the beginning, and not the ending of of those times) which God hath spoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts, iii. 21. And the whole New Testament teacheth us, to wait for

the coming of Jesus, from heaven; (1 Thes. i. 10.) which would be highly absurd, upon the supposition, that he is always to abide there: which yet he must, if the word *for ever*, as applied to things of another state, intends *endless* duration.

Friend. I confess, I never observed this before.—But, do you know of any passages in the New Testament, where the words, *forever and ever*, certainly intend *limited* duration? For I observed, that all the instances you brought were from the Old Testament.

Minister. Yes: Heb. 1. 8. But unto the Son he saith, "Thy throne, (in distinction from the throne of the Father) O God, is *for ever and ever;*" yet we read, (1 Cor. xv. 34, 28.) of the end, when he shall have "delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; then shall the Son also himself, be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Friend. But when Christ threatened sinners, with *everlasting* fire, *everlasting* punishment, and *eternal* damnation; did not his expressions naturally convey the idea of *endless misery?* And may not the Son of God be accused of duplicity and deceit, if he did not mean to denounce *punishment without end?* And, therefore, if we believe his words to be true, as most certainly they are, we must reject the doctrine of the restoration, which puts an end to a state, which is called *everlasting*, by the mouth of truth itself.—Are you able to answer this fairly?

Minister. If I am not able to answer this objection, which you have stated in the strongest

manner, I assure you, I will confess myself in an error; and shall thank you,(as an instrument) for bringing me to know it. The same objection that you make against the Restoration, the Jews make against *Christ* and *his religion;* for they argue thus: God is an unchangeable Being, and he declared, in most solemn manner, that the ordinances of the Levitical dispensation should be *everlasting*, and the annointing of Aaron's sons should be an *everlasting* priesthood, throughout their generations; (See Exod. xl. 15. and Lev. xvi. 34.)—and, therefore, we must reject the Messiah of the Christians, as an impostor; inasmuch as he pretends to abolish those statutes, which God hath called *everlasting*, and to set himself up as a Priest, contrary to the express promise of the LORD, who cannot lie, nor repent that Aaron and his sons should have an *everlasting* priesthood; and, therefore, if this is the true Messiah, God meant to deceive us when he promised us these *everlasting* blessings, and privileges, which, we must suppose were only *for a time*, if Christianity be true; therefore, we reject it, as being inconsistent with the promises of God.

It is evident, from this view of the matter, that the Jews reject Christ and his religion, upon as good ground, as you reject the Universal Restoration, and perhaps better; for you have nothing to plead against the Restoration, but some threatenings of punishments, which are called *everlasting* or *eternal*, in our translation, but they plead express promises of the *everlasting* continuance of their church state and worship, in opposition to Christianity. But if it be

true that both the Hebrew and Greek words, which our translators have rendered by the English word *everlasting*, do not intend *endless duration* but a *hidden period*, or *periods;* then the ground is changed at once, and the Jews have no right to object against Christianity, because God promised a continuance of their temple worship, for *a certain age*, or *hidden period;* nor the Christians to reject the universal Restoration, because God hath threatened the rebellious with such dreadful punishments, which shall endure through periods, expressed in the same terms. It is indeed confessed by some of the most learned Jews, that they have no word in their language, which absolutely signifies *endless duration;* therefore they can only argue the *endless* continuance of any thing from its nature, and not merely from the words rendered *forever*, or *everlasting*. And if this is the truth of the case (as who can deny it?) then, neither did Jehovah speaks to deceive the children of Israel, when he promised them blessings of such long continuance which have ended long ago, and which are never to be restored by virtue of that covenant which he made with their fathers, when he brought them out of Egypt; but by the new covenant which he *will* make with them when he shall return them to their own land; nor did the Son of God speak to deceive, when he threatened the wicked with those punishments, which shall not end till they have answered the purposes for which it seems reasonable to believe they shall be inflicted, viz. to bring them down and humble their proud and stubborn hearts; which shall be done, during the periods

of his kingdom, before he shall have delivered it up to the Father, that God may be ALL in ALL.

Friend. But if I should grant that the word *aionion* doth not even in the New Testament always signify *endless duration*, yet what would you gain by it, since it is plain that Christ hath set *the happiness of the righteous*, and *the misery of the wicked*, one against the other; and hath expressed the continuance of both, by the same word, *aionion*, in St. Matth. xxv. 46. Here, the punishment of the wicked, and the life of the righteous, are both declared to be *aionion* or *eternal*, without distinction. Now can you show me any passage of scripture, where the same word is applied to two different things, whose existence is not the same, or the time of their continuance not alike?

Minister. Fairly stated! And if it be not as fairly answered, it shall be looked upon as an insuperable difficulty. But, happily, there is a passage in Hab. iii. 6, where the same word is used for very different things; "He stood and measured the earth; He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the *everlasting* mountains were scattered, the *perpetual* hills did bow. His ways are *everlasting*." In our translation, the mountains, and the ways of God, are called *everlasting*, and the hills *perpetual*; but in the original, the word *gnad* is applied to the mountains, and the word *gnolam* to the hills, and the ways of God. But whether we argue from the original or from the translation, it makes no difference. The question is, are the mountains, or the hills, *eternal* in the same sense in which the ways of God are? If so, the earth must have existed *coeval* with the ways of Jehovah, and the

hills, and mountains, must never be removed, while his ways endure; and, as his ways can never be destroyed, the absolute eternity not of the earth only, but of its present form, its mountains and hills, must be inferred; contrary to Isaiah xl. 4. xliv. 10.—Ezek. xxxviii. 20.—Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11, 12.—Rev. xvi. 20 xx. 11.—Nay, even in this very text, the ways of God are spoken of as being of a different nature from the mountains, which were *scattered*, and the hills, which did *bow*.

Thus, no solid argument can be drawn from the application of the same word to *different* things, to prove that they shall be equal in their continuance, unless their nature be the same.

Thus in the Greek New Testament, in Rom. xvi. 25, we read of the mystery which hath been kept secret, from *Chronois aioniois*, and in the 26 verse, we find, that it is now made known by the commandment *Tou aionion Theou*. But must it be argued, that because *aioniois* is applied to times, and *aionion* to God; therefore, *times* are as ancient as Jehovah, and must continue while he exists? The absurdity of this is too glaring. Our translators have rendered *Chronois aioniois*, "since the world began," instead "of eternal times;" and have thereby shown their judgment to be, that words cannot change the subjects to which they are applied, but the meaning of the words must be determined by the nature of the subject.

In Jer. xxviii. 8. the word *hegnolam* is used in the Hebrew; but the translators did not think themselves obliged to render it "*from everlasting*" or, "*from eternity*;" as it would have been

highly absurd to have read, *eternal* prophets, or prophets which were from *eternity;* and have therefore rendered it "*of old*" though it is a stronger word than *gnad,* which they have translated "*eternity.*" Isa. lvii. 15.

Many other instances of the like nature might be brought; but these are fully sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind, that nothing can be concluded in favor of *endless punishment,* from the word *aionion* being used to set forth the duration of it, as well as the duration of that life which our Saviour promises to the righteous.

But upon the supposition that our Saviour intends no more by the "life eternal," in the 46th verse of the xxvth of St. Matthew's gospel, than he doth in the 34th verse, by "the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world," (which it would be hard to prove) then an answer might be given without all this labor, in this manner, viz. that as the Father hath appointed Christ a kingdom, so he hath also appointed his saints a kingdom; (see St. Luke, xxii. 29, 30. Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21.) but as the kingdom which the Father hath given to Christ, as a Mediator, and as Judge, shall *end,* when he shall have subdued all things, and put down all rule, and authority, and power; (See 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28) so, of consequence, that kingdom which is given to the saints or overcomers, to subdue the nations, shall also *end,* when they all shall be subdued, and brought to submit. But as the glory of Christ shall not be *lessened* but *increased,* when God shall be ALL in ALL; so the happiness of the saints shall be so far from ending or being *diminished,* at that period, that it shall

then arrive at the summit of perfection; but shall never close nor decrease while JEHOVAH endures.

Some time ago, a woman came to hear me, and I happened to mention in my sermon, that Christ's mediatorial kingdom was called *everlasting* or *aionion;* but that *it must come to an end,* when the kingdom should be delivered up to the Father, when he should have put down all rule, and all authority and power. After sermon, she was asked how she liked? She answered, "Not at all: he says the *everlasting* kingdom of Christ shall end; and I never heard of such a thing before in all my life; and I am sure it must be contrary to Scripture." The person who asked her, told her, that there was such a text somewhere, she could not tell exactly where to find it. But the woman persisted in it, that there was no such text; and went away full of prejudice. Now, had this passage of Scripture been in the book of Revelations, it would not have been so much to be wondered at, that she had never heard of it; but when we consider, that this is expressed in that part of the 15th chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which is in the *burial service*—what shall we say?

Thus, if *Christ's* kingdom *shall end,* much more *Satan's!* If *rewards,* as such, shall cease, how much more *punishments!* If the *everlasting* kingdom of the saints, which they shall possess *forever and ever* (See Dan. vii. 18, 27) shall end, or be swallowed up in that kingdom of boundless love, where God shall be ALL in ALL; how much more, shall all sin, pain, sorrow and death,

cease, and have no more a name in God's creation!

Friend. But supposing the doctrine of *endless misery* to be a truth, how would you expect to find it expressed in the Bible?

Minister. I should have a right to expect, in the first place, that there would be no promises in the Scripture to the contrary; no such passages as these: "For I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return; that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear;" Isaiah xlv. 23. Mind well EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR. Swearing allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies *pardon, reception* and *protection*, on the part of the king; and a hearty *renouncing of rebellion, true subjection,* and *willing obedience*, on the part of the rebels. Kings of the earth may be deceived, but God cannot; he will never accept of any feigned subjection; and, therefore, all that swear, shall swear in truth and righteousness;—so shall rebellion cease, and disobedience be no more.

The apostle St. Paul, seems to quote this passage of scripture with some variation, in his epistle to the Phillippians, Chap. ii. 9, 10, 11; where, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, and the consequences of the same, he says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at (*or* in) the name of *Jesus* every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Now this

confession appears to me to imply *a willing subjection to the authority of the Saviour*, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit; for the same apostle saith, "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Then the argument thrown into a syllogistical form, will run thus:

If every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; then shall all rebellion cease.

But the first is true; therefore also the last. If every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; then shall the Holy Ghost work effectually in every man. As the major is proved by Phil. ii. 11, and the minor by 1 Cor. xii. 3, the conclusion must be evident to a demonstration.

Friend. I acknowledge, that in the present state, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; but when they shall stand before his bar, they shall confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father *by force.*

Minister. But St. Paul speaks generally, "That no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." He does not mention *time* or *place*, but represents the matter impossible; beside every expression here used, implies *a willing*, and not *a forced subjection;* as bowing in the *name* of *Jesus* and confessing him to be *Lord* of all, to the *glory* of *God* the *Father.*

Friend. But we are sometimes told, that God is as much glorified by the eternal damnation of some, as by the eternal salvation of others.

Minister. I have, indeed, heard some assert the same. But as the glory of God is the ultimate end of all that he doth, we may properly ask, why he should take any pains to save mankind?

But, above all, there is one objection that may be brought against this idea, which is hard to answer; and that is, God hath said, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xviii. 23. xxxiii. 11. It is evident to me, that God must take pleasure in what glorifies his name; and as he hath sworn that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, it must be set down for a truth, that *punishment*, without having the reformation and subjection of rebels for its end, is unworthy of the Being we adore; and even now, it is called "*his strange work*," and "*his strange act.*" But to proceed: If *endless* misery were a truth, I should not expect that the mystery of the will of God, which he hath made known unto his chosen, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself would be, "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one (*or* rehead) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth," Ephes. i. 9, 10. Far less should I expect to find, that "it pleased the Father that in him

should all fulness dwell; and, having made pea
by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile
things to himself; by him, I say, whether th
be things in earth, or things in heaven."—C
i. 19, 20. And I am not able to imagine, h
St. John's vision (Rev. v. 13.) could be just,
endless damnation is true, where he says, "A
every creature in heaven, and on earth, and u
der the earth, and such as are in the sea, all th
are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and hon
and glory, & power, be unto him that sitteth up
the throne, & unto the Lamb forever & ever."
the nature of things, it appears impossible to
to believe these passages to be strictly and lit
ally true, if *endless misery* be a truth: therefo
I say, that I should not expect any *intimati*
far less *absolute promises*, that God would destr
death, the works of the devil, and make all thin
new, with many others of the like nature.

We find it promised, that every knee sh
bow; and lest some might say, that *every* kn
meant only *some* knees, it is explained by the
spired apostle, to mean *all* things in heaven a
in earth, and under the earth; and not only
but every tongue shall *swear*, and *confess* th
Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God t
Father; which could not be, except all were
conciled to him, whether things in heaven,
things in earth: wherefore this is also promise
and, in consequence of their being subdue
humbled, made obedient, and reconciled, th
shall be *reheaded in Christ;* never more to go a
tray, nor break that band of eternal union, whi
shall bind all together in one body, joined to o

head; and all shall give never ceasing praise to God and the Lamb, *world without end.*

As endless damnation appears to me to be *against the promises*, I cannot hold it as an article of my faith; but were there no promises or intimations to the contrary in Scripture, I should not require it to be threatened in any stronger terms than it is; I should believe it as a truth, though I might not be able at present, to see the propriety and equity thereof; I should never suffer my weak reason to gainsay Divine Revelation: but my difficulty arises from these express promises of God, which compose so great a part of that book which is given us as a rule of faith and practice; and which promises expressly assert a future state of things beyond sin, sorrow, pain, and death of every kind; when all things shall be made new; and death, the last enemy of God, Christ, and man, shall be destoyed, swallowed up in victory; and sin, which is its sting, shall be no more in existence; and tears shall be all wiped away from all faces.

But, though I have acknowledged that I should not dare to dispute the doctrine of *endless damnation*, unless God had given *intimations*, and even *promises* to the contrary; since I find several dreadful threatenings in the Scripture, in which the word *aionion*, or *everlasting*, is joined with the punishment of the wicked; yet a very little attention will shew us, that the felicity of the righteous is promised in much stronger language, than the misery of the wicked is threatened in the Scriptures.

I remark in the first place, that the word *aionian*, rendered *everlasting*, or *eternal*, is used much

oftener in St. John's gospel alone, to express the continuance of the life, or well being, of the righteous, than it is used in the whole Bible, to express the misery of the wicked; and this remark is strengthened by observing that he never once uses the word in his whole gospel, nor in his epistles, to set forth the duration of punishment. See St. John, iii. 15, 16, 36. iv. 14. v. 24. vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68. x. 28. xii. 25, 50. xvii. 2, 3, in all which passages, the word *aionion* is used to express the continuance of the well being of the righteous.

But not to insist on this: I observe, that there are many stronger expressions (even in our translation) to set forth the well being of the righteous, than any that are used as connected with the misery of the wicked. Isaiah xlv. 17. we read, "Israel shall be saved in JEHOVAH with an *everlasting* salvation; ye shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, *world without end*." But where do we read, that the misery of the wicked shall have no *end*? The word *endless*, or *world without end*, is never once used by our translators, to express the eternity of punishment, in the whole Bible.

We read, in 1 Pet. i. 4. of "an inheritance, *incorruptible*, and undefiled; and that *fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven:" and in Chap. v. 4. of "a crown of glory, that *fadeth not away*;" and, Heb. xii. 23 of a "kingdom, which cannot be moved:" and our blessed Saviour's words are remarkably strong upon this subject, in many places; as, in St. Luke's gospel, Chap. xx. 35, 36, where he says, "But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the

(first) resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither *can they die any more;* for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection:" and in St. John, x. 27, 28, 29, we read thus: "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall *never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." In Chap. xi. 25, 26, Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall *never die.*" And in chap. vi. 50, he says, "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not *die.*" And he expresses the perpetuity of the heavenly bliss, and of our enjoyment of the same, by advising us, saying, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth," St. Matth. vi. 20. and St. Luke, xii. 32, 33. This is that which St. Paul calleth "a better and an enduring substance," Heb. xii. 34. But what shall I say of the apostle's words, 2 Cor. iv. 7? "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us, *kath hyperbo-*

len eis hyperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai emin: a glory exceeding *aionion*, or eternal, *to an excess.*" Here is an hyperbole upon hyperbole; beyond eternal; a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But it is not so much by the different words made use of to denote the permanency of the felicity of the righteous, from those which are used to express the duration of the misery of the wicked, that I judge of the *continuance of the one* beyond the other; so much as from the different sources from whence they flow, and of their different natures.

The happiness of those who are reconciled to God arises from their union to Christ; in which if they continue grounded and settled during this present life, wherein they pass through so many sore trials, the union will become so permanent, as that it will be impossible to dissolve it; and the very nature of things shews, that if we abide firm to the end, through all difficulties, and overcome all those things that would seek to separate us from Christ, when we come into that state where we shall meet with no more temptations, nor any thing that has the least tendency to draw our minds from God, we must, of consequence, remain attached, or united to him, while we have an existence. This doctrine was known to David; and therefore, he said, "While I live, will I praise JEHOVAH; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being." Psal. cxlvi. 2. civ. 33. It may be proved, that the union shall continue between Christ and his faithful ones after this life, and shall become indissoluble; and that neither "tribulation, nor dis-

tress, persecution nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword; neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us (who abide in him) from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." See Rom. viii. 35–39. See also St. John, xv. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10. 1 John, ii. 24, 28.

The never ending continuance of the life, or state of well being of the righteous, may be certainly inferred, with the greatest ease, from the continuance of the life of Christ; who is made an high priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," Heb. vii. 16. And he hath expressly declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also," St. John xiv. 19. Thus as long as the cause remains, the effect must continue; but the cause, even the life of Christ, must undoubtedly continue to endless periods; therefore also, the effect, or the life of those who are joined to him in an indissoluble union, shall continue. The apostle Paul understood logic as well as any in our days; and he thus reasons upon this glorious truth; "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we (who are led by the Spirit of God, and have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father) are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii. 16, 17.

Now, as Christ, the principal heir, cannot be disinherited; so, neither can those who are joint heirs with him. The Holy Spirit is given us as

the earnest of our inheritance, and to seal us to the day of redemption, 2 Cor. v. 5. Ephes. i. 13, 14, and iv. 20.—Christ is the head, and the overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, are the members of his body, and shall inherit all things; he will be their God, and they shall be his children; he is their life, and he "will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 12. St. Paul says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4.—And St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2. Thus, we are sure, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of things, that those who are drawn by the Father, united to the Son, sealed by the Holy Ghost, willingly choose the Lord for their portion, and constantly adhere to him to the end, shall never be separated from him in the future ages; for he himself saith, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," St. John vi. 57. And as Christ is the great attracting loadstone, that shall finally draw all things to him; it is evident, that he will preserve *for ever*, those whom he hath thoroughly drawn to himself, and who have adhered to him through the time of trial. Thus is the life eternal of the righteous, or their endless state of

well being, expressed in much stronger language than the misery of the wicked; and moreover, has its foundation in the union between Christ and his church, and in the nature of things.

Friend. But if the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and thereby causing us to adhere to Christ, and to follow him through all trials, makes our union to him so perfect, that nothing shall be able to separate us from him to all eternity; since we are confirmed in habits of goodness by free choice, and by oft repeated exercises; why, by the same rules, shall not the misery of the wicked be *endless*, seeing that they have chosen and adhered to evil through life, and by constant practice are confirmed therein? Evil is grown up to a body in them; and it appears to me as difficult to reform and bring them off from their vicious habits, as it would be to draw the saints in light from their adherence to virtue and goodness.

Minister. Your reasoning would be conclusive, upon the supposition that there are two eternal principles, viz. *good* and *evil;* if it can be proved, that evil is coexistent with goodness, that it hath always been; then, the absolute eternity of sin and misery may be easily inferred. This is the true foundation of *endless misery*, and it came from the Pagan theology. The Heathens believed in two *eternal principles*, ever warring against each other, and neither fully prevailing; that men had the liberty of enlisting under which they pleased; and that those who in life choose virtue should enjoy endless felicity; while those who chose and adhered to vice, would eternally remain under its dominion, and of conse-

quence be always miserable. Thus, the infernal deities being judged by the poor Pagans to be as eternal as the good gods, and more powerful; they sacrificed more to the evil principle than to the good, out of fear, and to appease the anger of those abhorred, malevolent agents; hence, the frequency of human sacrifices.

Now, when the Christian Religion triumphed over Paganism in the Roman empire, many of the philosophers embraced and professed it, but withal, retained many of their Pagan notions; among which was the *eternity* of these two opposite principles; hence arose the ancient sect of the Manichees, who believe not only the eternal existence of two contrary eternal Gods, one good and the other evil; but also, that all visible things are created by the devil; and upon this principle, they might argue the universality of damnation, with as much ease and certainty, as we, upon the contrary, may argue the certainty of the Universal Restoration, according to that glorious promise of God, Isaiah lvii. 16, 17, 18, 19, "for I will not contend forever, neither will I always be wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth; and he went on frowardly, in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith JEHOVAH; and I will heal him."

Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say, that he will contend *for ever*, and be *always wroth;* ought to give as good a reason, at least, why he will, as he hath given why he will not; and, consequently, must prove him not to be the Father of all spirits, and the Creator of all souls. If, therefore, it can be demonstrated, that Satan is an eternal, self-existent, immutable, evil being, and that he hath created all, or a part of mankind, (as some asserted formerly, and as I myself have heard lately) or that he hath drawn some of God's creatures into such a union with himself, that they cannot be separated from him; and that he will maintain his crown, throne and kingdom, in opposition to God, to all endless duration; then, and not till then, may the *eternity* of sin and misery, be concluded from the nature of things, with equal ease and certainiy, as the perfection and happiness of the saints.

But if the kingdom of evil, and all the works of sin, Satan and darkness, shall be totally destroyed by Christ, and all things shall be reheaded in him, who is the head of all principality and power, as well as of every man: See Ephes. i. 10. Col ii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 3. If every knee shall bow, & tongue shall swear, and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, shall confess that he is Lord; and all things whether in heaven or in earth, shall be reconciled to him. See Isaiah xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10. Col. i. 20. And all kingdoms (not excepting that of the prince of the power of the air) shall be broken and destroyed by the kingdom of Christ, which shall itself be yielded up into the kingdom of boundless love, where judgment shall be no

more. What shall we say of that doctrine, that teaches us the *endless duration of evil*? So far is the *endless sin* and misery of the wicked from being inferred from the *endless* holiness and felicity of the righteous, in the kingdom of the Father, that every proof and demonstration of the latter, concludes equally against the former.

One of the first arguments that ever began to take hold of my mind, and to bring me to think seriously of the system of the Restoration, was, what I read in a little book upon the subject, called *The Everlasting Gospel*, &c. and is there thus expressed.

"It is as impossible that there should be two endless contrary things, as that there should be two real contrary Deities, a good God and a bad one, or two sorts of contrary creatures, both of truly divine original, some being made good by God, and others bad. For an absolute and merely infinite duration, which has neither beginning nor end, is, according to the confessions of all divines, yea, of every reasonable man, a property peculiar to the uncreated Being only. But such an infinite duration, which, although it has a beginning, yet shall have no end, can only be the property of those creatures that are of divine original. For as these, according to the language of the scripture, are of divine origin, and therefore are rooted in God, or in his almighty creating power, which has no beginning, they can also be everlasting, their existence or duration can also be without end in God. But whatsoever has not its eternal root in God, or in his eternal creating power, but is

sprung up in the creature in this world, by its voluntary turning away from God,& against his holy will, and consequently is an admonition and displeasure to the Most High, and is only suffered by him, such as sin, and the punishment depending thereon, these things cannot possibly be of an absolute endless existence and duration, or remain so long as God shall exist; but must of necessity once cease and be annihilated. For as God is a Being to those creatures which he created good, and which exists through his will, wherein they may subsist and be preserved without end; so he on the contrary, to iniquity and sin, (which against his will, is sprung up in and sticks to the creatures) is a consuming fire, whereby all sin and perverseness in the creatures must be at last consumed, annihilated, and separated from them in the highest degree, in order to restore them to their primitive purity; in the same manner as the fire doth not consume and destroy the gold, but only the dross, and that which is impure."

We will now state some of the arguments in favor of the *endless* continuance of the happiness of the saints, in the kingdom of their Father: and those which prove that the state of misery shall come to an end.

Christ hath promised, that the happiness of the saints shall have no end; because *his life* shall have no end, and he is *their life.*

The misery of the wicked shall end, because the kingdom of evil shall end.

The power of God stands engaged to preserve and keep those who commit themselves to

him; and thus, their union with him shall always continue.

The same is engaged to destroy that covenant with death, and the agreement with hell, whereby sinners are held in subjection to Satan, and thus to take the prey from the mighty, and the captives from the terrible.

The subjects of Christ are his natural subjects; he is their rightful sovereign: but Satan's subjects are slaves led captive by him at his will; he is an usurper, and all that are in bondage to him belong to Christ, who will finally draw them all to himself.

Those that are in bliss shall be eternally attracted by him, and shall always choose that which is good; but when evil is broken, its influence shall no more prevail over those that are captivated by it; and they shall feel the consequences of sin in such a manner as to loathe it; and they shall heartily return, and swear allegiance to their rightful King.

There shall be no influence to draw the saints in bliss from Christ, and thereby dissolve his kingdom; but all the influence of God and goodness, shall tend to dissolve the kingdom of darkness, and to put an end to the thraldom and misery of its unhappy slaves.

Thus, I might go on with a long train of arguments upon this subject; but these may suffice.

Friend. Your arguments would seem very conclusive, for the entire subjection of all things, if you could prove that the word ALL, intends literally and mathematically, the whole, without exception; but this I doubt, will be difficult for

you to do, as you must know that it is very frequently used in common language for a part; and sometimes for only a small part of mankind.

Minister. I acknowledge this is the case in common conversation, and in such parts of the sacred history where we are in no danger of being misled by it, being well informed by the context, or some other passages, or from the nature, or from the circumstances of the facts, that we must take it in a limited sense; but I do not recollect any passage, where any point of doctrine is spoken of, in which the word ALL is used in that uncertain and undeterminate manner; and it is necessary that it should not be used in that way, in matters of importance; because we might be led into confusion and great uncertainty thereby; not knowing whether to understand it universally, or partially.—Wherefore I lay down this plain rule, viz. when the word ALL is used in any passage of Scripture, and we are not necessarily obliged, either by the context or some other text, or the nature and circumstances of the case, to understand it partially; and especially where any important point of doctrine is spoken of, we are always to understand it universally, without exception.

Friend. But can you prove from the writings of the apostles, that they used the word ALL in this large and universal sense?

Minister. Yes, my friend, very easily, and in the most unexceptionable manner. Hear what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says upon this matter: "Thou hast put ALL *things* in subjection under his feet; for in that he put ALL

in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him." Heb. ii. 8.

It is evident, that the apostle's reasoning would be very inaccurate, if not entirely false, upon the supposition that ALL *things* did not intend ALL, in the largest sense; for how would this conclusion naturally and necessarily follow, "For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him;" unless it be premised, that ALL is used in the universal sense of the word.

Friend. But hath not the same apostle made an exception, when he used the word ALL, in some other of his writings?

Minister. Yes, truly; but it is such an exception as justifies this sense of the word, more than a thousand arguments: "For he hath put ALL *things* under his feet; but when he saith, ALL *things* are put under him, it is manifest, that *he is excepted which did put* ALL *things under him.*" 1 Cor. xv. 27. Here God the Father being alone excepted, proves all other beings to be included in the words ALL *things;* and that in so convincing a manner, that I am astonished that I did not perceive it long before I did.

Friend. It is true, that nothing can be plainer, than that ALL *things* in these places, must mean ALL beings except God; but then, perhaps, St. Paul only meant, that they should be subject to his control, and not brought willingly to obey. If you can prove this point as clearly as you have the other, and from the same authority, it will seem to put the matter with me beyond dispute.

Minister. This is very easily done; for it is universally acknowledged by all Christians, that all things are now, and have ever been subject to his control; for when he was upon earth, in his lowest state of humiliation, even the unclean spirits, the most rebellious of beings obeyed his word; which made those who saw his miracles cry with amazement, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him," St. Mark, i. 27. The devils obeyed him universally in whatever he comanded them; and could not enter into the swine without his permission; and how disagreeable soever his words were to them, they were *forced* to comlpy, without daring to complain; yea, they frequently seemed like humble suppliants; and once we read, they went so far as to adjure our blessed Lord not to torment them: See St. Mark, v. 7. The winds, waves, fishes, all obey him; all diseases, and even death itself, heard his voice, and departed at his bidding; and to his disciples he said, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth," Matth. xxviii. 18. And certainly now, he is at "the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him," 1 Pet. iii. 22.—God hath exalted him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; and every name that is named; not only in this *age* (for so I render the word *aioni*) but also in that which is to come; and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church," Ephes. i. 21, 22. But as though the apostle had known that the sense would be dis-

puted, he hath said, " But now we see *not yet all things put under him*," Heb. ii. 8. All things were subject to his control, *even on earth;* and they cannot be less so, now he is exalted to heaven, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and yet many years after his ascension, the apostle says, "But now we see not *yet* all things put under him;" by which he must certainly mean their being *willingly subject* unto him; for, in all other senses, all things are *now* put under him, in the most unlimited manner, as we have seen already. But the apostle goes on to tell how far the important work is accomplished, and that a sure foundation is laid for its entire completion; saying, " But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for ALL;" (for so the word *pantos* ought to be rendered.) There was anciently a manuscript in use, in which the words were *choris Theou* instead of *chariti Theou*, that is, *for all* EXCEPT GOD. And there is a little doubt of its being the true sense; because St. Paul makes the same exception, with respect to those who are put under Christ, as we have before noted, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

Then the apostle adds, " For it became him, for whom are *all things*, and by whom are *all things*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. ii. 9. 10.

Instead of the word *all* intending only *a part*, we find in several places. that the word *many* intends *all*, as in Rom. v. 15, 16, 19. " For if

through the offence of one, *many* be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *many*. The free gift is of *many* offences unto justification. For, as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous." Isaiah liii. 11, 12. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify *many* (or *the* many) for he shall bear their iniquities. And he bare the sins of *many* and made intercession for the transgressors." These *many* are called *all*, in the 6th verse. "*All* we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and JEHOVAH hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*."

But to return to our subject: St. Paul assures us, that though *all things*, without exception, are put under him, in one sense, yet, in another, he says, "But now we see not yet *all things* put under him." But he leaves us not in the dark about the matter; but speaks of that effectual "working, whereby he is able even to subdue *all things* unto himself," Phil. iii. 21. And when *all things* shall be subdued unto himself, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put *all things* under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL." 1 Cor. xvi. 28. Here we plainly find, a very necessary distinction between all things being put under him; and all things being subdued unto him, the former is already done in the fullest manner; and the latter shall be as perfectly and fully accomplished in due time: "Because the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the

glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now," Rom. viii. 21. 22.

Though what hath already been spoken, may seem more than enough to prove the point respecting the word *all;* yet there is one passage more, full to the purpose, that I would not omit; it being of itself, fully sufficient to settle the dispute forever:—The apostle, speaking of Christ saith, " Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him were *all things* created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things* were created by him, and for him; and he is before *all things*, and by him *all things* consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in *all things* he might have the pre-eminence.—For it pleased the Father, that in him should *all* fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, to reconcile *all things* unto himself; by him, I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. i. 15, 20.

As the word *all* is generally acknowledged to be used in its most extensive sense, in every place in this paragraph, except the last, there is no reason to be given why the apostle should change the sense of the word, without giving us the least notice of it; and, indeed, it would be very unkind, if not unfair, for him thus to do; as it would tend to mislead us in a matter of very great importance.

Friend. I hope I am not so attached to my own opinions as to be unwilling to hear and consider what may be advanced against them; but the doctrine of *endless damnation* has been so generally considered as a most important article of faith by all denominations, that I can by no means think of giving it up, unless you are able to establish the contrary system upon the most solid ground, and answer all the scriptural objections fairly, that have been, or that can be brought against it; for I must have all my doubts solved, before I can think of believing such a strange doctrine as this appears to me.

Minister. I most heartily commend your prudence and sincerity. I took the same resolution; and would never receive this view, till I could answer all objections to my own satisfaction; and if you are disposed to inquire farther at another opportunity, I shall be happy in giving you all the assistance in my power.

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE II.

Friend. Good day to you, Sir, I was just passing by, and if you have a little time to spare, I should be happy to have some further discourse with you, respecting your sentiments; for although I cannot fall in with your views, yet I am convinced, that your mind is upright in the matter, and that you do not disagree with your brethren for the sake of differing, but for what you believe to be truth.

Minister. I have this to say, (and I can with truth declare it) that I never should have dissented from my brethren, had they only given me the liberty of enjoying that natural right of freely thinking for myself in matters of religion. I sincerely wish to live and die in unity with all that love God and keep his commandments; and I should never have troubled the world with my sentiments, had not great pains been taken to represent me as a heretic, and my sentiments dangerous to mankind: this was done to prevent people from hearing what I had to say in other matters.—I was therefore, in a sort, compelled to sit down and answer all the objections that were brought against the truth I believed; which answers drawn (as I trust) fairly from the Scriptures, have satisfied many who have read what I then wrote upon the subject.

Friend. I never saw your answers to objections in print; but in our last conversation, you gave such answers to many questions, as seem-

ed to convince me that much more might be said in favor of the general Restoration than I formerly imagined: but I have a number of objections remaining, which appear to me unanswerable; and which I beg leave to state in the plainest manner.

Minister. Do, my dear friend; you will give me pleasure by being free and open upon this subject; propose all your objections in the strongest manner possible, and I will give you such answers as have satisfied me in the matter; and I beg leave to assure you, that no light, trifling, or forced answer, far less a manifest evasion, would satisfy my mind upon this awful and interesting subject; and if what I believe is not capable of a scriptural defence, I shall endeavor to quit the ground as speedily as possible.

Friend. The words of our Saviour, recorded by St. Mark, ix. 43—49, form a very serious, and to me an unanswerable objection against the Universal Restoration.

"And if thy hand offend thee (*or* cause thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell; into the fire that never shall be quenched (*or* that is unquenchable;) where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee (*or* cause thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched (*or* that is unquenchable); where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, (*or* cause thee to offend) pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of

God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

Here our Lord repeats five times, that "the fire is not, or never shall be quenched, or is unquenchable;" words of near similar meaning: three times he speaks of hell, as a *place* where "their worm dieth not;" and, to show the propriety of the sufferings of the miserable, he says, "For every one shall be salted with fire;" i. e. preserved by the fire, as salt preserves meat. These are the objections from this passage, briefly stated: are you able to answer them fairly, without any evasion, from the authority of scripture.

Minister. This is certainly a most terrible passage, and deserves to be considered particularly.

There is no doubt but Jesus Christ had his eye upon that passage in Isaiah lxvi. 24.—"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

It will be of use to us to understand when this prophecy shall be fulfilled: It shall be when the children of Israel shall return, and be settled in their own land; and their enemies shall come against them, and shall be destroyed, and their carcases shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, and shall be a prey to the fowls of heaven, and their flesh shall be devoured by worms,

which shall not die, till they have eaten and entirely destroyed their bodies.

"Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee; I will give thee to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field, to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken it, saith Adonia JEHOVAH. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea; and it shall stop the noses of the passengers; and there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude, and they shall call it, the valley of Hammon Gog. And seven months shall the House of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land."—(See Ezek. xxxix. 4, 5, 11, 12.) "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, JEHOVAH, of Hosts and to keep the feasts of tabernacles." Zech. xiv. 16. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith JEHOVAH." Isaiah, lxvi. 21. And they that shall come up to Jerusalem, to worship the Lord, during the time that these bodies shall lie in the open field, shall go forth, and behold them in a state of putrefaction, a prey to worms; and all the nations of the earth shall see God's judgements executed upon those who dare rebel against him, by making war against the Lamb, and against his army.—Rev. xvii. 14. xix. 19.

It is also intimated by Ezekiel, that a fire shall be kindled, to burn their weapons of war, &c. which shall last for some time. Hear his words: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves and the spears; and they shall burn them with fire seven years; so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire." See Ezek. xxxix. 9, 10.

Thus have I endeavored to give the plain sense of the text to which our Lord alluded; and I have not the smallest doubt of its being hereafter literally fulfilled.

I will now endeavor to give what appears to me the meaning of the text before us:—Christ threatened that those who would not deny themselves, and cut off those things that led them into sin, should hereafter suffer infinitely greater inconveniences, by being cast into hell fire. And, oh! who can conceive how dreadful a portion is threatened to some transgressors! that they "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation! and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:—And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up ages of ages; and they have no rest day nor night." Rev. xiv. 10. 11.

Thus, as the enemies of God, who shall be destroyed near Jerusalem, shall have their car-

cases exposed, full of worms, and be an abhorring unto all that behold them; so those who are cast into the burning lake, shall be publicly exposed to shame, and shall suffer openly for their crimes; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up *continually*, during those ages that the lake of fire, or the second death, shall continue.

But when I consider that this terraqueous globe itself is probably to become the lake of fire, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and yet after that dreadful scene is past, the earth itself shall be renewed, and become the habitation of righteousness; I can hardly have any doubts, but all the rational part of the creation, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." See Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Thus, if the lake of fire, or second death itself, shall be destroyed, shall cease, and be no more;—there is an *end* to *tormenting pain;* though, perhaps, such *inward reflections*, shall continue for some time longer, (if not to eternity) which, though they shall tend exceedingly to increase the love of God in the souls thus delivered, shall fill them with shame similar, or perhaps more pungent than we feel here on earth, when we are melted under a deep sense of our manifold transgressions, and of the pardoning love of God at the same time. This seems to me to be the meaning of such passages as these:

"O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains

on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that—(our translators have added the word *men*, but the sense determines that the addition should be)—"*they* may know that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth. Psal. lxxxiii. 13, 18.

"The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools." Prov. iii. 35.

"They shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten." Jer. xx. 11. xxxiii. 40.

"They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them; they shall go to confusion together, that are makers of idols." Isa. xlv. 16. "And all that are incensed against him, (JEHOVAH) shall be ashamed."—verse 24.

"For thus saith the Adonia JEHOVAH; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger (*viz.* Samaria and Sodom);—& I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by the covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shall know that I am JEHOVAH: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pa-

cified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith Adonia JEHOVAH." Ezek. xvi. 59—63.

"Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith Adonia JEHOVAH, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded, O house of Israel."—Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32.

But the lake of fire shall go out, when all the purposes for which it shall be kindled are accomplished; and if so, then it follows of course, that intelligences shall be no longer tormented therein.

Friend. But when God says; that a fire shall not be quenched, does it not necessarily imply, that it shall never cease burning?

Minister. By no means; for we read in several places of Scripture of fires that have ceased, ages ago, that were spoken of in as strong terms as are used by Christ, respecting the fire of hell.

As for instance: in Lev. vi. 13, we read, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall *never* go out." This is a much stronger expression than if it had been said, "It shall not be quenched;" for it is said, "*It shall never go out.*" But surely, it must be used with some limitation; for we know that it hath ceased ages ago. And we read, that Daniel prophesied of the Messiah, that he should "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." Dan. ix. 27; but it would certainly have been a weak argument against Daniel's prophecy, that as Moses had said, the fire should never go out upon the altar,

therefore the Messiah could never cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; but it would be just as good an argument against Daniel's prophecy, as the words of Christ are against Isaiah's: "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—Surely shall say, in JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength; to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Isaiah lvii. 16. xlv. 23, 24.

In Jer. xvii. 27, we read: "But if you will not hearken unto me, &c. then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and *it shall not be quenched.*" See also chap. iv. 4. xxi. 12. Amos v. 6. 2 Kings xxii. 17.

Similar threatenings we find positively pronounced by Ezekiel, at the command of God. Moreover the word of JEHOVAH came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face towards the south, and drop thy words towards the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field, and say to the forest of the south, hear the word of JEHOVAH; thus saith Adonia JEHOVAH, behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north, shall be burnt therein; and all flesh shall see that I JEHOVAH have kindled it; *it shall not be quench-*

ed," Ezek. xx. 42, 46, 47, 48.—See also Jer. vii. 20.

Now these threatenings were surely executed; for the people did not hearken to God; he did certainly kindle a fire, and it burnt, and was not quenched, but consumed Jerusalem and all her palaces; and the beautiful forests that were so much esteemed, shared the same fate. But what person will argue, that the whole city and country must be now in flames; and must have been consuming, from the days of Jer. and Ezekiel, because of these expressions, "The flaming flames shall not be quenched," &c. since we know that Jerusalem, and the country round about, have been since inhabited, and will be again in a more glorious manner than ever?

Neither will it help the matter to say, that we must understand the fire *figuratively*, for the angel of God, &c. for he declares by Zechariah, after the seventy years captivity, that he was "returned to Jerusalem *with mercies*." See Zech. i. 16. And though the present desolation of that land is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim. Deut. xxix. 23, 28. And Ezekiel not only speaks of it as desolate and waste, but as having been always so; though we know that it was formerly filled with inhabitants: (See Ezek. xxxvi. 34, 35. xxxviii. 8.)—Yet all the Prophets speak of a time to come, when it shall be much more flourishing than it hath ever been: and Isaiah says, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt no more be

termed forsaken; neither shall thy land be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (*my delight is in her*) and thy land Bulah (*married*) for JEHOVAH delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Isaiah lx. 15. lxii. 4.

Thus we may see, by these and many other passages that predictions apparently directly contrary the one to the other, may be all fulfilled upon the same land, people and persons, only allowing a proper time to each, without which we can never make sense of many prophecies.

Isaiah, speaking of the land of Bozrah, says, "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone; and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched, night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it, for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven, shall dwell in it;" (birds that cannot live in fire, pitch, and brimstone, any better than men.) "And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and is shall be an habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.—There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with his mate.—Seek ye out of the book of JEHOVAH, and read; no one of these shall fail,

none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein." Isaiah, xxxiv. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Now, in this passage, there are such things spoken of as are impossible to be fulfilled at once, without as great a miracle as was wrought for the three children in the furnace; and which there is no reason to expect will be wrought in favor of cormorants, bitterns, owls, ravens, dragons, satyrs, wild beasts, thorns, nettles and brambles. In the 10th verse we read of a period called *for ever*, wherein this land is to be on fire and is not to be quenched, night nor day; and the smoke of it is to ascend up *for ever;* but in the 17th verse it is said, that the before mentioned birds and beasts shall possess it *for ever*, even from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. But one of these periods must end, before the other can begin; the fire must cease to burn, and the smoke to ascend, before beasts can take up their constant dwelling there, and birds can lay and hatch, and gather their young ones under their shadow, and enjoy the society of their mates. And thus the whole prophecy may be fulfilled; not in the *same*, but in *different* periods: and thus also, may all the threatenings, and all the promises, in the sacred book be accomplished; not at once, but each in their season.

It appears evident, that our Lord, by alluding to a fire that shall burn on earth, and to

worms that shall devour the flesh of the slain, could not mean to prove the torments of men to be absolutely *endless;* at least, the expressions of *the worm* that *dieth not*, and *the fire* that *is not quenched*, do not *necessarily* imply it; which has been sufficiently proved, by the passages where the same or similar expressions are used, where yet the subject cannot intend *endless* duration; and this is all that can be necessary to prove at present.

As to the expression of being *salted with fire*, as *every sacrifice was salted with salt;* I am not so clear, what might have been our Saviour's intent in this expression; but I think, in the first place, he intended to teach us, that they should not be *annihilated* by the fire, but *preserved* therein, to be tormented day and night, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, during the ages of ages. I would also propose, whether our Lord did not mean to intimate, that even the fire itself shall be of use under his direction, to humble, subdue and penetrate the stubborn and disobedient rebels, that shall be cast into it. *Fire*, as well as *salt*, is a great purifier; and preserves and cleanses those things which are able to endure it; and is the great agent by which all metals are separated from their dross, and prepared for the use for which they were designed. Under the law, all unclean things, that could endure the fire, were ordered to be cast into it, in order to their cleansing.

Friend. What you have said concerning the fires that are represented as unquenchable, in several passages of Scripture, is worthy of at-

tention; but you should consider, that these fires were all on earth, and in time, and therefore must have an end, or cease to burn; but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore must last as long as eternity shall endure. Pray, what can you say to this?

Minister. Had those *unquenchable* fires never gone out while earth endured, or while time lasted, there might have been some force in this argument; but since the continuance of the fire does not depend upon the *season* in which it is kindled, but upon the *combustibles* that feed and support it, this can be no objection: therefore, since those unquenchable fires that have been mentioned, were kindled on earth, and yet not burn while earth lasted, but have gone out long ago; there is no necessity of granting (even tho' we should admit your premises of the fire of hell being kindled in eternity) that the unquenchable fire of the burning lake *must* unavoidably burn to *all eternity* merely because it is supposed to belong to that state: but if punishments only belong to those ages of ages before Christ shall resign the kingom to the Father, and the lake of fire shall be this terraqueous globe, dissolved, or melted, with fervent heat; then the ground is changed, and the whole objection vanishes of course.

Friend. As you have come over this objection better than I expected you could, I shall leave it for the present, and consider more fully, when I am by myself, what you have said upon this subject; and shall now propose the greatest objection that can be brought against the Restoration of all men, from the Scriptures; and

ich, if you can fairly answer, I shall be al-
st persuaded to believe with you; but I am
rsuaded that you will be hard put to it.

Minister. Produce your cause, and bring
rth your strong reasons, that we may hear
em; and if I am silenced, I will not be ashamed
o acknowledge it with all my heart.

Friend. I shall bring my objection from the Scriptures, and state it with the utmost precision that I am able: It is the sin against the Holy Ghost, of which our Saviour speaks in the most awful manner; saying, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall (*or* may) be forgiven him;—but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world(*or* age) neither in the world (*or* age) to come. Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall (*or* may) be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, (*or* hath not forgiveness to the age) but is in danger of eternal damnation." St. Matth. xii. 31, 32. St. Mark, iii. 28, 29. This is such a matter of importance, that three of the evangelists notice it. St. Luke hath it thus: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall (*or* may) be forgiven him;—but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." St. Luke, xii. 10. St. Matthew saith, this sin shall not be forgiven

this world, nor in that to come; St. Mark, that such an one hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; and St. Luke positively saith, it shall not be forgiven: and to confirm the matter still more, if possible, St. Paul saith, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, (*or*, and have fallen away) to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, by the mouth of two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. x. 26, 27, 28, 29. And the same Apostle directs us, saying; "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane persons, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was re-

jected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears." Hebrews xii. 15,16, 17.

And St. John the beloved disciple, says; "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." 1. John v. 16.

Now here is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in this world (*or age*) or in that to come; which shall not be forgiven at all; he that committeth it hath never forgiveness, is in danger of eternal damnation; he cannot be renewed again to repentance, because he hath crucified Christ to himself afresh, and hath put him to an open shame; having sinned wilfully and maliciously, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, to such no more sacrifice for sins remaineth: judgement and fiery indignation are his certain portion, he is an adversary, and must be devoured; a sorer punishment than death without mercy awaits him, of which he is worthy, for that he hath trodden under foot the Son of God, the only Saviour, and hath counted the precious blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and which alone is able to cleanse from sin, an unholy thing; and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace, which is only able to renew the heart, and therefore the case of such must be desperate; for if such an one like Esau, should wish to repent and gain what he had lost, it could not be, for he would find no place for repentance, though he might seek it carefully with tears; for having commit-

ted the sin unto death, for which no prayer is to be made, no intercession offered up, he is bound over to the second death, the lake of fire and brimstone, and must bear the punishment of his sins for ever and ever!!! What say you to this?

Minister. As when Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel his dream, he was astonished for one hour at the greatness of the punishment which he saw would inevitably come upon the King; much more must all those be, who read and consider these dreadful threatenings which must surely come upon all those who have sinned in the manner described! I shall make a few observations upon these most terrible passages of Scripture; partly to prevent feeble minds from falling into despair, that may see them collected in one striking view; partly to cure proud minds of presumption; and partly to shew that the doctrine of the Restoration may be defended, notwithstanding.

1. We are sure that the scribes and Pharisees of our Saviour's time, who blasphemously ascribed his miracles to the power of the devil, did, in the most direct and undeniable manner, commit that sin, and some are doubtful whether it can be committed by any in these days.

2. It is generally acknowledged, that the Hebrews were in danger of committing that sin, by openly and wilfully apostatizing from Christianity, and publicly renouncing Christ and his salvation, and blaspheming against the Holy Ghost after having been partakers of its extraordinary gifts.

3. It cannot be committed by ignorant persons, nor without a considerable degree of malice prepense; light in the understanding, and malice in the heart, are necessary ingredients of this dreadful crime; and it appears to me, it must be committed openly, and that it cannot be committed in thought only.

4. Under the Levitical dispensation there were many unpardonable sins—crimes that could not be forgiven or overlooked, and for which no atonement could be made, and which were punished with death, without mercy; other crimes, unless sacrifices were offered, and repentance took place, subjected the parties to death also: but under the gospel, there is but one crime that is properly unpardonable, and that absolutely subjects the person guilty of it to the second death; yet many other sins are threatened with the same punishment conditionally, but they may be forgiven, and not punished at all; but this one must as certainly be punished with the second death, as murder or any other crime, was by the law of Moses punished with the death of the body without mercy or forgiveness. *Forgery* is the unpardonable sin of England; people frequently suffer death for other crimes, as well as this; but other offences are sometimes forgiven, but this never; it is always punished with death. This circumstance may illustrate my meaning. The sin against the Holy Ghost is an offence of that kind, that, either owing to its uncommon malignity(as is most likely) or some other cause, exposes the guilty persons to the age of judgement, from which he cannot escape by repentance, pardon, and sprinkling of

the blood of Christ as other sinners may: neither can he be at present born of the Spirit,-to which he hath done despite; nor can he be reclaimed by any possible means, in this age, or in the age that is to succeed this, but is inevitably bound over to suffer the inconceivable torments of the second death, or lake of fire and brimstone after the day of judgement.

5. There is no kind of dispute between us, respecting the certainty of the punishment of such; in this we both agree: He that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, is in danger of eternal damnation, or judgement, or the second death:—The question is, shall there ever come a time, when the second death, or lake of fire, shall no more exist? If this can be proved, the conclusion will be evident, viz. that not one shall remain under the power thereof to all eternity: Upon this, and this alone, depends the solution of this awful, interesting, and most important question; and I consider all other answers as mere quibbles, compared with this. And if it cannot be proved that a time will come when all that bears the name of death shall be destroyed, those who commit the sin unto death, must at least be allowed to stand as exceptions to the general rule: and, I am apt to think, the rule itself will be overthrown. I shall therefore labor this point a little; and if I should be so happy as to prove to your satisfaction the total destruction of death, it will answer many other objections as well as this. My only refuge is scripture; if that fails me, I shall not presume to pursue the subject farther.

Isa. xxv. 8. "He will swallow up *Death* in victory; and Adonai JEHOVAH will wipe away tears from off all faces." Hos. xiii. 14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death, O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, (*or* hell) I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." 1. Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *Death*"—or rather, as the words may more properly be arranged, "*Death*," the last enemy, shall be destroyed." The second death is infinitely more the enemy of man than the first, and may therefore be considered as an enemy which God will destroy.

Now, if the last enemy shall be destroyed, there will not be one left.

But the first is true; therefore also the last. As, would it not be highly absurd to say, that, although the very last enemy shall be destroyed, yet, many millions shall remain to all eternity?

Verse 56. "The sting of *Death* is sin." While sin remains in existence, death will be able to show its sting; but the time will come when death shall have no sting to boast of; therefore sin, and consequently death of every kind, shall be destroyed. 1 John iii. 3. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Unless Christ finally destroys the works of the devil, even all sin out of the universe, his purpose must be eternally frustrated.

But the last can never be; therefore the first is true.

Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch, then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself

likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."—Now what death has the devil power over? The death of the body? Or that of the soul, which consists in enmity against God, and separation from him? "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."Rom. viii. 6, 7. If this death with the consequence of it, is that which the devil hath the power of, then must this death be destroyed.

But, I think, the first is true; therefore also the last.

Rev. xxi. 4. We read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more *Death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Here is a state spoken of beyond all death; a state wherein, sorrow, crying, and pain shall be no more. This state is cotemporary with the new heaven and earth, after the lake of fire hath ceased.

Friend. We have always understood this passage to relate to the death of the body, and even to the death of the righteous only; but making this state cotemporary with the new heavens and earth, seems to throw new light upon the subject.

Minister Most certainly the word *Death* here implies the second death; for we are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the first resurrection even that of the martyrs who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of

God; and such as had not worshiped the beast and his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands; then we read of a thousand years between this resurrection, and the rest of the dead living again; after this, we find, that the dead, small and great, stood before God, and were judged; and such as were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire, which is expressly called "the second death;" which as before observed is probably the earth in its melted state. In this chapter we find, that all things are to be made new; and *Death* is to be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain. But this must be the second death, or lake of fire; for the resurrection of all the bodies, both of the just and the unjust, had been spoken of before.

Thus, as all sin, and all that bear the name of death shall be entirely destroyed at last; the doctrine of endless misery seems to fall to the ground, or at least cannot be certainly proved from scripture, but rather the contrary.

The time must come when all things shall be subject to Christ, when he shall destroy death, the last enemy, by destroying sin which is the sting of death, so this dreadful sin, as well as others, shall be no more. For if this was not to be the case, it never could be true, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" for it never would abound quite so much; neither would death and hell be silent when God should ask the great questions, "O death where is thy sting? O grave (*or* hell) where is thy victory?" for death could say, here is my sting,

that sin against the Holy Ghost, which must endure to all eternity, and which even divine grace shall never destroy; I have, therefore, the victory and dominion over these sinners who have committed it, and will hold it while God himself exists. Then death could never be destroyed, nor swallowed up in victory; neither would sorrow, crying, and pain cease; neither could God ever be ALL IN ALL, in any other sense, with respect to them, than he is now; nor would every tongue swear; neither would all things wholly be made new; nor all the former things ever pass away! Neither could the universal chorus of praise ever be sung by every creature, in heaven, or earth, and under the earth, and throughout God's wide domain; and, finally many Scriptures would never seem to be fulfilled, in the fullest sense. Rom. v. 20, 21. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death; even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, if grace shall abound more than sin, it shall be as universal and more powerful. But the first is true therefore also the last. If grace shall be as extensive as sin, and more powerful, all who have sinned shall be restored; but the first is true; therefore also the last.

What consequences must follow from the supposition, that some of God's creatures shall always remain his enemies! Either God created some to be miserable to endless ages, or must be frustrated eternally in his designs, or all must be restored at last, and made happy by love and free love.

The first is blasphemous, the second is dishonorable to God; therefore, the third must be true: for I cannot think of a fourth conclusion.

Friend. What do you think of the deplorable case of Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears?

Minister. He certainly lost, or rather sold his birthright; in consequence of which, he lost the blessing belonging to the firstborn: but lest any should be led to conclude from this, that poor *Esau* had no blessings at all, the same apostle informs us, that, "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come." Heb. xi. 20. By this we find, he was blessed as well as Jacob; but in a less degree.

Friend. Do we not read, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom. ix. 13. Mal. i. 2, 3.

Minister. Yes, most certainly: but then this love and hatred, so called, was manifested to their posterity, and not to their persons, in the manner described by the prophet; "I have loved you, saith JEHOVAH; yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness." This manifestation of hatred did not affect the eternal state of their souls, but their condition in this world. God declared, that Jacob's seed should exist as a distinct people to the end of time, but that Esau's should not; and this differ-

ence is evident; for the remains of Esau's seed were, in the days of the Maccabees, incorporated with the seed of Jacob, and existed no more for ever, as a nation by themselves. From Jacob's race the Messiah was to come, and all nations were to be blessed in the seed of Israel. In all these instances, and in many others, there was a manifest preference of Jacob to Esau; but nothing like positive hatred can be intended.

Christ says, (St. Luke, xiv. 26) "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But we cannot suppose our Lord intended positive, but comparative hatred; according to St. Matthew, x. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

Friend. What you have said upon this subject appears to have some weight, and I will consider it more fully hereafter; but I must beg leave to ask you, how you get over that great gulph which is placed between the regions of *Paradise* and *Gehenna*, of which Abraham speaks to the rich man; saying, and besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Does not this imply the absolute impossibility of the rich man's being ever restored?

Minister. You have asked me many questions; give me leave to ask you one. Do you

believe, that Jesus of Nazareth was able to pass that impassable gulph?

Friend. Indeed, that is a question I never heard proposed before; and which I am not prepared to answer, without farther consideration. Pray be so kind as to give an answer yourself, and tell me what you think of it.

Minister. I believe, that with man it is impossible; but with God all things are possible. And I believe, that Jesus Christ was not only able to pass, but that he actually did pass that gulph, which was impassable to all men, but not to him. And he assures St. John, that he had passed it, and not only so, but that he had the keys of the same in his possession; for he saith, "Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." And St. Peter informs us, that "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us unto God); being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; who sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." And he also tells us, that we "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead," (in distinction from them that are quick) "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." See Rev. i. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. iv. 5, 6.

Friend. You know, the common opinion is, that the Spirit of God, in Noah, preached unto the inhabitants of the old world; who, in St. Peter's time, were shut up in the prison of hell. But I must confess, it appears to me a very dark text.

Minister. If you only observe how particular the expressions are in these texts, I think it will soon appear that not the Spirit of God in Noah, but the spirit, or soul, of Christ in its disembodied state, is here intended. His body was doubtless quickened by his soul, or spirit, coming into it again: was it not?

Friend. It seems most reasonable to believe it was.

Minister. Then observe the next words, he went; here the idea of a journey to a distant place is intimated, the original word being expressive of an actual passage from one place to another, and is the same that is used in verse 22, for the ascension of Christ into heaven; so that he appears to have gone into the prison in the same proper sense, as he afterwards went into heaven. He actually journied to the place of confinement, *and preached to the spirits, &c.* He preached the gospel, no doubt, not to men in the body, but to the spirits, to those in a disembodied state; not only so, but to the spirits in prison. Had they not been in prison, Christ would not have gone into the prison to preach to them. But, who were these spirits?—St. Peter informs us, that they are those who were sometime disobedient; but this expression intimates that the time is perfectly past; as, "Ye were the servants of sin; for when ye were the servants of sin, ye

were free from righteousness." Rom. vi. 17, 20. St. Peter tells us when they were disobedient; when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. Here he evidently distinguishes the two periods of their visitation; one is called the preaching of Christ, by his spirit, after he was put to death in the flesh; and the other is called the long suffering of God, which waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. The long suffering of God waited upon them, before they were drowned, while the ark was building; but Christ preached to them when they were spirits in prison. They were disobedient to God's long suffering; but it is not certain that they were so when Christ preached to them; but the contrary is intimated in these words: "For, this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, &c. This cannot intend those that are spiritually dead only, but those whose bodies are dead; because we here find the dead set in opposition to the quick, or those whose bodies are alive, and not those that are spiritually alive; for we may observe, that whenever the words quick and dead occur, by quick, we always understand those whose bodies are alive; and by dead, those who have ceased to exist here.

Acts, x. 40, &c. St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius and his family, informed them of Jesus, who was slain, whom "God raised from the dead, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before God; even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead. And he commanded

us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he, who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." And St. Paul says to Timothy, I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word," &c. See 2 Tim. iv. 1. So, in 1 Pet. iv. 5, the words quick and dead are used in the same manner; and then immediately, while the idea is warm in our minds, the apostle gives us the reasons why the gospel was preached to the dead, (*or* the spirits in prison) of which he had before informed us, and now repeats again, and assures us, that it was, that they might be judged according to men, in the flesh; or, as though they had heard it while they were alive in the flesh; but also, that they might live according to God, in the spirit. The gospel not only was, but is, preached to them that are dead, in a moral or a spiritual sense. It need not have been said; For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, if only the spiritually dead are intended; for it is rarely preached to any other but such. Why should it be said, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, if they were men in the flesh at the time when it was preached to them?

This passage proves the existence of the soul after the death of the body; for unless the soul of the antediluvians existed after the drowning of their bodies, Christ could not have preached to them in prison. But the dead being opposed to the quick in this passage, sufficiently, and even incontestibly, determines the sense.

With a little attention, we may easily be convinced, that Christ was not only designed to be a covenant of the people, (meaning the Jews) and a light to the Gentiles; which two descriptions, comprehend all the living; but also, to bring out the prisoners from prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison house; which (if it be not a repetition) must intend the dead, as all the living were mentioned before.

"And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith JEHOVAH, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Thus far the Redeemer's work seems limited to the earth, and respects the living. But the prophet goes much farther, and says, "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth; to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger, nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy upon them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." See Isaiah, xlii. 6, 7. xlix. 6, 8, 9, 10. Compared with Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17. The words of the Saviour, as described by the elegant pen of Isaiah, (chap. lxi. 1, 2, 3) seem to comprehend a great variety of particulars; all which he hath

performed already, or shall execute in due time. "The Spirit of Adonia JEHOVAH is upon me; because JEHOVAH hath anointed me, (1) to preach good tidings to the meek: (2) He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted; (3) to proclaim liberty to the captives, (4) and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: (5) To proclaim the acceptable year of JEHOVAH, (6) and the day of vengeance of our God: (7) To comfort all that mourn: (8) To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them: *First*, beauty of ashes; *Secondly*, the oil of joy for mourning; *Thirdly*, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called, *First*, Trees of righteousness; *Secondly*, The planting of JEHOVAH, (*and* ALL *for this end*)—that he might be glorified."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his process, hath laid a foundation for the recovery of all men. "For to this end Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 9.—He passed through all our states, that he might redeem us. He came down from heaven—he was conceived in the womb of Mary—he was born of her—he lived in the world unknown—he sympathized with us in our sorrows—he bare our sins in his own body, on the tree—he was buried—he descended into *Hades*—he arose—ascendeth—sitteth at the right hand of God—and maketh continual intercession for us.

It seemed necessary, that our Saviour should visit men in all situations, that he might redeem them.—The apostle informs us, saying, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of

flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage Heb. ii. 14, 15. It was not only necessary that he should die, to vanquish death, and to redeem us from its power; but it was equally needful for him to go into those places, where spirits were confined in the regions of darkness, that he might gain universal dominion, spoil principalities, and redeem the captives whom he had bought with his blood, in order that he might ascend up to Heaven, and open to his followers the gates of eternal life.

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Col. ii. 15.

Thus our Saviour by his divine process, hath obtained a right to open the prison doors, and let the captives go free; and though the rich man was in torments where he could not get a drop of water to cool his tongue, and had *judgement without mercy*, because he had *shewed no mercy*; yet it is possible that, by the blood of the covenant, he may be sent forth out of the pit wherein there is no water. See Zech. ix, 11.—The Lord

Jesus is able to take the prey from the mighty, and to deliver the lawful captive. Isa. xlix. 24.

"Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction, and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High; therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down and there was none to help." This evidently points out the deplorably miserable state of sinners, cut off in their sins; having rebelled against God's words, and contemned his counsels; for which reason he hath shut them up in darkness, and in the shadow of death; in such a situation, that no power but his own, can give them the least help, much less *release*. Such circumstances seldom occur in this life; but these words are a lively and affecting description of the miseries of the future state.

"Then they cried unto JEHOVAH in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. O that men would praise JEHOVAH for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." Psal. cvii. 10, 16.

This amazing deliverance seems to be described in such language, as corresponds much better with the deliverance of the spirits from their dreadful prison, than with any temporal mercies that are bestowed on mankind *here on earth*. "The righteous shall see it and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth: whoso is wise, and will observe those things, even they

shall understand the loving kindness of JEHOVAH," ver. 42, 43.

Those who are acquainted with the Divine character, and see his designs of mercy towards his creatures, shall rejoice in the same. They that are wise, shall observe these things, and shall understand his loving kindness; and that "JEHOVAH is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." Psal. cxlv. 9.

Thus, how impossible soever it might appear to us, that the rich man should ever be delivered, we must remember, that "with God nothing shall be impossible." St. Luke i. 37. "Is there any thing too hard for JEHOVAH?" Gen. xviii. 14. "Behold (says he) I am JEHOVAH, the God of all flesh: Is there any thing too hard for me?" Jeremiah xxxii. 27.

Our Saviour says, St. Matth. xix. 24, St. Mark x, 25, St. Luke xviii. 25. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Whether the word here used, intends a camel, or a cable, it certainly implied the greatest difficulty imaginable, even amounting in the view of his disciples, to a natural impossibility, or they would not have been as the evangelist expresses, *exceedingly amazed and astonished out of measure* at his words, "saying among themselves, who then can be saved?" But though Jesus meant to represent the matter as in itself a kind of natural impossibility, and absolutely impossible to men; yet he could not intend thereby, that it never should be accomplished, because he immediately adds, "with men this is impossible; but not with God. For

with God all things are possible." St. Mark, x. 27. Therefore, though it was impossible for *men* to pass the gulph between *Paradise* and *Gehenna;* yet as we have seen, Christ was able, and therefore as we know not the *ne plus ultra* of his power to save, we cannot positively conclude *against the Restoration,* from this instance of the rich man, unless we could find some passages o Scripture, where God has promised never to restore, or to reconcile such to himself, whom he hath once cast off; the contrary to which, I think, may be proved; but I am at present considering, that, in the nature of things, it is not impossible for God to restore the rich man, if he so pleases; and consequently others that are in the same situation.

Behold the rich man in another world—He seems *now* to have much more true benevolence in him, than in his life time; for when he could not obtain a drop of water for his tongue, he pleads much more earnestly for Lazarus to be sent to his five brethren, to testify to them, lest they also should come into the same place of torment with himself. Here he urges the matter most earnestly; and does not seem willing to be denied. This shows him not to have been so lost to virtue as Satan; since he and his angels, though miserable themselves, seek to make all men so too, though their torments are increased thereby.

Add to all this, that Abraham called the rich man, "*Son*" and bade him remember, that in his life time he had his good things; and likewise Lazarus, evil things; and that therefore it was but reasonable that the scene should be chang-

ed; that Lazarus should be comforted, and he tormented. And I think, nothing can be fairly argued from this case, in favor of *endless damnation:* For in this case if he was doomed to suffer *while God exists*, there could be no proportion between the sufferings, torments and evil things of Lazarus on earth, and those which *he* endured in hell; whereas it is intimated in the Scriptures, that all things are determined by number, weight and measure.—Let us hear what our Lord has said upon the subject. . St. Luke xii. 47, 48. "And that servant who knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with MANY stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with FEW stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him, they will ask the more." But what difference, so much to be noticed, could there be, if both were to be beaten *to all eternity*? Or how could either be said to have FEW, if there never was to be an end?—Impossible! Rev.xviii.7. "How much she (Babylon) hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously; so much torment and sorrow give her." All this appears just and reasonable. But to suppose a poor ignorant heathen, or a child of ten years old, will remain in misery as long as the most persecuting tyrant, or apostate Christian; seems to cotradict all the ideas we have of justice and equity, as well as of goodness; for in this case, who can suppose that each one is exactly rewarded according to his works? And especially can any think, that *mercy* has any

hand in a reward, where there is seemingly no proporton? Whereas we read (Psal. lxii. 12) "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work."

Friend. Indeed, I could not have thought that so much could have been said upon that side of the case; and though I am not yet, wholly satisfied, I must confess, some of my great difficulties seem to be removed from what you have said; and yet there appears something very dreadful in the account. Pray, do you understand it as a parable?

Minister. I am most inclined to think it is a piece of real history, known to our Saviour, who was well acquainted with what passed in the spiritual, as well as the natural world; and who intended thereby to give an awful warning to the Pharisees, (who were covetous) of the dreadful condition of wicked rich men in the next state; and especially, of those who neglect or despise the poor.

Friend. I am inclined to think with you in this matter; and therefore, without any farther delay, I shall pass to mention another strong objection to the doctrine of the Restoration of all men; *viz.* the instance of *Judas;* of whom our Saviour says, "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man, if he had not been born. St. Matt. xxvi. 24. St. Mark, xiv. 21. If Judas should ever be restored, how could the Saviour say, "Good were it for that man; if he had never been born?" I think you will find it difficult to re-

move this objection; for, if he is ever to be happy, (though after many ages) it will be good for him that he was born.

Minister. I cannot think that this is so strong an argument against the general Restitution, as most that use it imagine. It was a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man, or his family, to say, "Good were it for that man, if he had never been born." And thus our Saviour used it with great propriety respecting Judas; for who that thinks with any reason at all, would not have wished that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer.

Friend. But can any thing less than *endless* damnation be sufficient to justify the expression of "Good were it for that man, that he had never been born.

Minister. I am of opinion that even worldly troubles (short as they are) may sufficiently justify the expression. There are a thousand circumstances into which the children of Adam fall, that make their case infinitely worse than though they had never been born, even without supposing a state of future punishment at all. I had rather, a thousand times, never have been born, than to have betrayed Christ, even upon the supposition that I had never been doomed to suffer for it beyond this life.—Job, when he had lost his substance, his children, and his ease, opened his mouth, and, through excess of grief cursed the day of his birth; though it does not appear that he had any fear of future damnation, but the reverse.

And Job spake, and said, "Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night in which it was said, there is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above; neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of months. Lo! let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up in their mourning.—Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day; because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did not I give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or, why the breast that I should suck? For now should I have been still, and been quiet; I should have slept; then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, who built desolate places for themselves; or with princes, that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or, as an hidden, untimely birth, I had not been; as infants, who never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." See Job, iii. 2—19.

From this discourse, it seems, that Job thought it would have been better for him never to have been born than to have fallen into such sore troubles in this present life, without taking the other into his account; but if he had known that he had been doomed to suffer the amazing torments of the second death, in the lake of fire and brimstone, what would he have said; Even upon the supposition that it was only to last for ages, he would have thought that his being born into this world to be fitted for such a punishment, would have been the greatest curse that could have befallen him.

If Job, who could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. He knoweth the way that I take; and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (See Job, xix. 25, 26, 27. xxiii. 10, 11, 12. xiii. 15, 16. xxvii. 6.) And who could make such a solemn protestation of his innocence and uprightness, before God and man, as we find

in the xxix. xxx. xxxi. chapters of that book. If such a man had reason to say, "Wherefore then, hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh! that I had given up the ghost and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave." (See Job, x. 18, 19) with what amazing propriety might Christ say of Judas, the traitor, who sinned in such a dreadful manner, and had such horrible guilt on his conscience; who died in black despair, perished in such an awful situation, in his sins, and, probably, by his own hands; who suffered the most violent agitations of mind, died under the power of the horrid suggestions of the great enemy of men, without one smile, or look of forgiveness, from Jesus, or even daring to seek it; whose sorrow in this life far exceeded Job's, (for Job had no sense of guilt, treason, and ingratitude; nor was he filled with rage, blasphemy, and despair)—and who must probably have his portion in the second death;—"Good were it for that man, if he had never been born! even upon the supposition that his torments are not designed to continue *while God exists.*

Jeremiah is another instance much to my purpose; who wished he had never been born, even at the very time when he knew that the Lord was his helper; only because he had been put in the stocks by Pashur, and had suffered a little pain and shame in a good cause. He was not afraid of *endless damnation*, nor yet of any future punishment; for he thus expressed himself, in all the language of full assurance: "But JEHOVAH is with me, as a mighty terrible one;

therefore, my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O JEHOVAH of Hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them (or, thou wilt let me see, &c.) for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto JEHOVAH, praise ye JEHOVAH, for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers. How strong his faith! how full his assurance! Yet it is evident, that he thought it would have been much better for him personally, never to have been born; for he immediately adds, "cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which JEHOVAH overthrew, and repented not. And let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave; and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I out of the womb, to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" See Jer. xx. 11—18.

Here is not a word about a state of future punishment, much less endless damnation, and yet the good prophet Jeremiah thought, that if he had never been born, it would have been far better for him.

Friend. I must confess, I never before considered it possible to answer this objection; you

have done much towards solving it; but you must consider, that both Job and Jeremiah passionately exclaimed, and, through sorrow, uttered such words, as, in their cooler moments they repented of; and therefore, what they spake of themselves cannot wholly set aside the objection. Had they delivered those expressions as general truths, and declared, that man had much better never have been born, than to have suffered such degrees of worldly sorrow, it would have more than answered the objection; but, when men under grief exclaim in such a manner, we cannot ground a matter of such importance upon what they say respecting themselves; as their minds, being overwhelmned with trouble, and the immediate sensations of pain, are biased, and cannot utter the calm dictates of sober reason. But Christ, though under great sorrows himself, saw the case of Judas so deplorable, that he expressed himself thus respecting him; which was the sober truth, whithout exaggeration; and could this be said of him, or if any other of the human race, upon the supposition that misery is not absolutely endless?

Minister. We do not find that Job or Jeremiah ever recanted, in their cooler moments, what they uttered in their sorrows; and our Lord, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem says, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days," See St. Matth. xxiv. 19, St. Mark, xiii. 17. Not because of their future, endless damnation, in distinction from others; but on account of their present trouble and sorrow; as is explained, Luke xxi. 23. "But woe to them that are with

child, and to them that give suck, in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." And when the Saviour was led to death, we read, "And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, who also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us.—For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" St. Luke, xxii. 27, 31.

And who would not, a thousand times, choose rather never to have been born than even to see, far less experience, the miseries which came upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants? Would it not have been better for mothers never to have been born, than to have killed and eaten their own children in the siege?—and would it not have been better for the children never to have been born, than to have been food for their mothers?

But Solomon not only represents a state of great misery and affliction in this life, as worse than not to have been born, but also, a state of the greatest prosperity, if it ends in disgrace; for he says, "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good; and also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he.

For he (the untimely birth) cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness; and his name shall be covered with darkness. Moreover, he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good!" (*i. e.* no equivalent good, to balance his disgrace.) "Do not all go to one place?" All came from dust, and turn to dust again. Eccl. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6.

The state here described by Solomon, is not only infinitely better than the damnation of hell, though limited by certain peroids; but far preferable to many, if not to most situations of men in this life; and yet he prefers an untimely birth to a man who lives more than twice the age of Methuselah, and has an hundred children of his own, if he has not his soul filled or satisfied with *good!* and that he hath no burial, or has not honor, (credit, or reputation) at his death.

Long life and *many children*, were formerly esteemed as the greatest of blessings; but as the things of this life cannot fill the soul with good; so a man had better never have been born, than to have enjoyed the good things of this world in the greatest profusion, if he dies in disgrace, and has no burial, or is not honored at his death. Yet this is not worthy to be named in the same day with the damnation of hell! yet is frequently threatened as a great and terrible judgement; which if it falls upon a man, however he may have enjoyed long life, health, wealth, and all kinds of prosperity; it makes it worse for him than if he had never been born, according to the decision of God himself; and, therefore,

no wonder that Christ said of wicked Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Though I have answered you so largely, yet one word might have sufficed to have answered the whole objection at first; viz. had Judas died before he had been born, and perished from his mother's womb, he would never have sinned, far less betrayed Christ; he would have entered into peace immediately, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." In that case, he would have escaped the judgment that came upon him, and would have had more rest than those who should live in all the affluence of life two thousand years, and beget each an hundred children, and yet should not be honored at their death.

Some would have answered the objection shorter, by saying, Christ promised twelve thrones to his twelve apostles, among whom Judas was one; and therefore, he must be restored, or the promise cannot be fulfilled; See St. Matth. xix. 28. But this I do not insist upon; nevertheless, those who answer the objection this way, make an observation that may be worth attention: viz. that Peter, speaking of Judas saith, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein:" that is, let his mansion be reserved for him, let no man take possession of it: but "His bishopric, or office, let another take." See Acts, i. 20, compared with Psalm lxix. 25. cix. 8. But I am rather of opinion that the desolation of the habitation of the wicked, and the want of inhabitants in their tents, respects this state, and is part of the curse

pronounced upon all traitors: and may therefore, in an eminent sense, be applied to Judas, and also to the rebellious nation of the Jews at large: and therefore, as these words do not intend their Restoration, so neither are they any objection to it: for St. Paul applies part of the 69th Ps. to the Jews, as truly as St. Peter applies it to Judas: See Rom. x. 9, 10. And yet he says, "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: But rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? And thus, from the 11th verse to the end of the chapter, goes on to speak of their being again received, reconciled, and grafted again into their own olive tree; and that their blindness is only for a time: "And so all Israel shall be saved: There shall come out of Sion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" That God's covenant, or promise, is to take their sins away; that they are beloved for the Father's sake; that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: that, therefore, they shall obtain mercy at last: that for this very purpose God hath included them all (*or* shut them up in unbelief) that he might not only punish them thereby for their transgressions, and also, through their unbelief, cause the Gentiles to obtain mercy and salvation; but also, that he might have mercy upon all those, whom he had thus shut up in unbelief, without exception. See the whole chapter.

Here, then, are three designs worthy of a God of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, in this one dark dispensation, the rejection of the Jewish church and nation:—1. That he might punish them for their iniquity:—2. That others might come in their room, stand in their office, and be made partakers of their privileges; and 3. That they may be reserved to mercy and forgiveness at last. And what happened to a whole nation of traitors, might happen to an individual of that nation; and *vice versa*.

Friend. This is a subject of great importance, and if you can maintain the system you have espoused, and answer the remaining objections that may be brought against it, it will most certainly give me pleasure, and relieve my mind from great anxiety. I am a father of many children, and God knows the tears I have shed on their account, but could I receive your views with what pleasure should I look upon them!

But I have many remaining difficulties and objections still to propose; may God preserve me from error and false doctrine, I wish to know what is really the truth in this matter, for above all things I dread deception.

Minister. I assure you my friend that I should be as loth to deceive you as you are to be deceived, and had I not the surest confidence through the Lord of the truth and reality of this most glorious system, and did I not find the highest satisfaction in it myself, I should never presume to hold it forth to others. But as I have an engagement that calls me elsewhere just now, I must beg you to excuse me, hoping that in a little time I shall have another opportunity of

hearing the remainder of your objections; and in the mean time I advise you to search the scriptures, and pray God to lead you into all truth.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE III.

Friend. I am glad to meet with you, to have some farther conversation upon the very important and interesting subject of the final Restoration. Since I saw you last I have had opportunity of hearing some very capital objections made against this system, which I beg leave to state in the plainest and strongest manner.

Minister. Your frankness is well pleasing to me, and I am ready to hear whatever can be urged against my sentiments, and will do my endeavour to answer all reasonable objections; therefore propose them as soon as you think proper.

Friend. One grand objection that is very generally made against the doctrine of the Restoration, is, that it tends to *licentiousness;* that it is the doctrine that the serpent preached to Eve; for we read, (Gen. iii. 4.) "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die;" and that it is a doctrine calculated to give encouragement to the wicked to continue in their evil ways; that it is "saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace;" and that this doctrine is as dangerous as that of the wicked prophetesses of Ezekiel's time, of whom GOD says, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not re-

turn from his wicked way, by promising him life They say unto them that despise me, JEHOVAH hath said, ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you." Jer. viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 22. Jer. xxiii. 17.

It is said that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin, and, therefore, he has threatened it with eternal, or endless punishment; and this is even found too weak to prevent the prevailing iniquity. What a flood of impiety, therefore, would overflow the world, if it should be generally believed, that after some ages of suffering, mankind should be restored to some degree of happiness? Would not the restraints be wholly taken off from the lusts and passions of the wicked, if once this doctrine should become prevalent? Will you be so kind as to give a fair and candid reply to this objection?

Minister. This objection is stated with all possible force, I shall, therefore, endeavor to answer it as well as I can; putting in this *caveat*, that if I shall not answer it to your satisfaction, do not imagine that no solid answer can be given; but impute it to my not being sufficiently master of my subject, or not being able to express my mind so clearly as I could wish. As this objection is frequently made, and often used, by people who mean well, but have not considered the subject thoroughly, I shall be as explicit as I possibly can upon it.

I would first observe, that the great truths, or first principles, upon which the Restoration is founded, and from which it is derived by natural

and easy consequences, are far from tending to licentiousness. But in order to make this evident, it will be proper here to set them down in their order.

First principles upon which the Doctrine of the Final and Universal Restoration is founded.

1. GOD *is the universal and only Creator of all;* contrary to the opinion of the *Manichees* of old, who believed the *devil* to be creator of most, if not all visible beings. The *Mugletonians*, of the last century, and the *Buchanites* lately, assert nearly the same sentiments; contrary to Rev. iv. 11. Col. i. 16. Psalm c. 3. Numb. xvi. 22. Isaiah lxiv. 8. Ezek. xviii. 4. Zech. xii. 1. and a vast number of other scriptures.

Now who can say, that this noble thought, which St. Paul enlarges upon so beautifully, (Acts, xvii. 24–30) tends, in the least, to make men wicked? Does it not tend to dignify and ennoble human nature, to be told, that God is our Father, Creator and First Cause; and that we were made by his power, according to his will, and for his pleasure; and that the *chief end* for which he made us, was, *to glorify his name, and enjoy him forever?*—as the Assembly's Catechism beautifully declares. This is one of the principles from which God himself deduces the certainty of the final end of wrath, as I have observed before:—"For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Isaiah, lvii. 16.—Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say, that he *he will*

contend forever, and be always wroth! ought to be able at least to give as good a reason why he will, as he has assigned why he will not; and consequently prove, that he hath not made all souls; which is the true foundation upon which endless misery must be founded, and the only doctrine which is perfectly consistent with it.

The poor untutored Indians in America, argued (with a missionary that was sent from Sweden to convert them) from the universal providence of God, that he, who was so kind a Father as to provide for their bodies all things needful, had not wholly neglected their souls. But this I do not insist upon, though, I think, the argument has weight in it; and certainly, the providential goodness of God, and his long suffering, tends to lead men to repentance. Rom. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

2. *The universal benevolence of the Deity,* or the *love* of God to his creatures, is one of the first principles from which the general Restoration is deduced: and who can say, that this leads to licentiousness? If those who believe that God loves them, in particular, find *that* consideration the strongest obligation on them to love him again, and to obey his will; by the same rule, if all the individuals of the whole human race, were to believe that God loved each one of them, would not the same cause produce the same effect? And if so, can this be charged as a licentious doctrine, which is expressly grounded upon a cause which powerfully operates to produce holiness? Is there any thing like argument in this reasoning? I know that God loves me, and seeks to do me good; therefore, I

must hate him. What should we think of a woman who should leave her husband; and do all in her power against him, and should be able to give no better reason for it than the following: "My husband loves me, and I know it, and he has always loved me, and always will; and therefore I am determined to hate, ridicule, despise, and contemn him, and have left him for this very cause, and am determined never to love or obey him more." Bad as human nature is, I question whether such instances often occur. We commonly say, that love begets love. "We love him because he first loved us;" says the apostle, 1 John, iv. 19. Therefore, the doctrine of God's universal *benevolence*, cannot lead to licentiousness, in any light in which it can be viewed; for, if he really loves us, he will do all in his power to bring us to love him again, and to be like him; and I am sure the consideration of his love to us, goes as far as moral persuasion can go, to induce us to love him again, nay, the belief of it is acknowledged to be one of the strongest motives to obedience; and the love of God, shed abroad in the heart, produces the best effects, and is the most powerful principle, and spring, of good and virtuous actions, that we are acquainted with. This being a first principle, from which the universal Restoration is concluded, we are happy to find, that "God is love:" and that he "so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life: For, God sent not his Son into the world to condemn *the* world; but that the world, through *him might* be saved." See 1 John, iv. 16. St.

John, iii. 16, 17. But it is not so much my business now to shew, that the sentiment is scriptural, as to shew that it is not of a dangerous tendency. The following words, however, are so beautiful, that I take the liberty to mention them:—"but thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend. For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made; for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it. And how could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy will; or been preserved, if not called by thee? But thou sparest all; for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. For thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things: therefore chasteneth thou them, by little and little, that offend, and warnest them, by putting them in remembrance wherein they have offended, that leaving their wickedness, they may believe on thee, O Lord. For thy power is the beginning of righteousness; and because thou art the Lord of all, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all. But thou, O God, art gracious and true; long suffering, and in mercy ordering all things. For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power; but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine:" Wisdom of Solomon, xi. 23, 26. xii. 1, 2, 16. xv. 1, 2. "Jehovah is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. Jehovah is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Jehovah; and thy saints shall bless thee." Psal. cxlv. 8, 9, 10.

3. Another great principle upon which the Restoration depends, is, that Christ died for all; "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." (or all) Heb. ii. 9. "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John, ii. 1, 2. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

I need not multiply passages to prove that Christ died for all; for though the universality of his death is not expressly asserted, in every text where it is mentioned that he died, it must always be understood; because it is never denied in any place, and is plainly, and pointedly declared in those I have quoted. And, besides, it is evident that in the apostles' time, the universality of the death of Christ was a first principle, universally acknowledged, and therefore, St. Paul reasons from it as such; which it would have been highly preposterous for him to do, if that had not been the case: as, for example, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all," (which is not disputed by any, and which we know to be a truth) "then were all dead: and that he died for all; that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Friend. But have you never heard it argued that Christ did not die for all, because he did not pray for all?

Minister. I remember, when a lad, I was sent to a neighbor's house, and overheard the good man, the master of the family, read in a book after this manner: "Christ did not die for all, because he did not pray for all; I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." St. John, xvii. 9. And I then thought the argument conclusive; but I am now at a loss whether the author of that book meant to deceive his readers; or, whether he had never read the chapter through critically. For had he read the 20th verse, he would have found these words, which would have overthrown his hypothesis:—"Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word." If Christ had prayed for all, in the 9th verse, for whom he died, he could not have enlarged his prayer so much in the 20th verse, as to take in not them only, but all who should believe on him through their word. Neither does he stop here, but goes on to pray for those that believe in these words: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us:"—And why is all this unity prayed for among unbelievers? Surely, it hath never been accomplished; but it shall be, for this great and admirable purpose: viz. "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me; that

they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." v. 21, 22, 23.

Friend. But when shall the world believe, and know that Christ is sent from God?

Minister. When all that believe shall be one, as the Father and Son are one. When the great marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated, and his bride shall be one, in the bond of universal love and fellowship, as the Father and Son now are: when the church shall be perfected in one; shall dwell in love, and dwell in God, as the Father dwells in the Son, and the Son in the Father: when Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye: when all believers shall speak the same thing; when there shall be no more divisions among them; when they shall be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

This was the state that St. Paul besought the Corinthians to press after, and wished them to attain; but he had the mortification to see them fall short of it, as all the Christian churches have, from that day to this. But when *Christ* shall give that glory and honor to his bride, which the *Father* gave to him, and shall thus unite her to himself, in an indissoluble union, and the several members of his body the Church, shall be as much united one to another, as the members af the natural body are; or, to express it in his own words, "As thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*." When thus the church shall be one, in spirit, love, design, judgement, &c. as the *Father* and *Son* are; then shall the *world believe*, and believing, have life; then shall the

world know him, whom to know is life eternal. See verses 2 *and* 3. But as this great cause has never yet existed, the *effect* has not yet followed; but when the *first* shall be, the *last* shall take place in consequence.

The petitions in that most excellent prayer, that may, with great propriety be called the LORD's prayer, may be divided into four classes. 1. For himself, verses 1st and 5th. 2. For his apostles, 9, 19. 3. For them that should believe through their word, 20, 21, 22, 23. And 4. for the world, verses 21, 23: as I have just observed, and need not add any more upon so plain a matter.

Friend. Proceed, if you please, to show, that the doctrine of the *universality* of the death of *Christ* does not lead to licentiousness.

Minister. It is evident that it doth not; but on the contrary, it is the strongest motive to all who believe it, to love and live to him who died for them, and rose again. We *are not our own, but are bought with a price;* therefore, we are exorted not to be the servants of sin, slaves to our passions, and servants to men; but to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his; and the apostle beseeches us by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is our reasonable service. Forasmuch, as we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver & gold; but with the precious blood of *Christ*, as of a *Lamb* without blemish, and without spot. See 2 Cor. v. 15. Rom. vi. 12, 13. 1 Cor. vii. 23. vi. 19, 20. Rom. xii. 1. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

What a horrid thought would it be, that *Christ* should be the minister of sin, and that his blood-shedding should cause wickedness to abound! The love of God in giving his *Son* to die, is enough to move a heart of stone. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time, *Christ* died for the ungodly, for, scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure, for a good (kind, benevolent, generous) man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ* died for us. Much more being now justified through his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his *Son*; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 6, 10.

Here the death of the *Lord Jesus* is laid as the ground and the salvation of men inferred from it, wth the greatest possible certainty; yet, will any one say, that because *Christ* hath died for him, therefore he will indulge himself in sin? God forbid. Some say that if they believed this doctrine, they would live in sin; and indulge themselves in their lusts and passions: but then it may be observed, that those who say so are its enemies, and those who oppose the view, and not those who receive it.

There is something so brutish and unaccountable in such dispositions, as would lead men to hate their best friends, merely because they are so; that would lead them to hate God, because he loved them; despise *Christ*, merely because he died for them; that for the honor of human nature, I would hope these instan-

ces are rare. But to the point; I have conversed with many who believe that *Christ* died for them in particular; and yet I never heard them say, that they hated him for it; but, on the contrary, that they loved him exceedingly. Now, is not the same cause likely to produce the same effect? If a thousand persons, for instance, all believing that *Christ* died for them, find their hearts constrained to love him for it, would it not have the same effect upon ten thousand, ten millions, or ten millions of millions?—And if it would cause licentiousness to abound in the world, to preach that *Christ* died for all, if it was universally believed; by the same rule it must cause it to prevail, in a lesser degree, to preach that he died for a small part, at least, among those who believe themselves to be of the number; and, therefore, it must not be preached at all, that he died for any?—Who can deny the consequence? It seems to be evident, that *Christ* has done and suffered too much for those that he died for, to lose them finally; and thus the universal Restoration stands connected necessarily with the universality of the death of *Christ*, and is deduced therefrom, in the eaisest manner; therefore, the doctrine of the *former* cannot tend to licentiousness, as it stands upon the ground of the *latter*, which hath been demonstrated to have no such tendency.

4. Another principle upon which the universal doctrine depends, is, *the unchangeableness of God:* whom he loves once, he also loves; he loved his creatures when he made them, as none can well deny; their sins he never loved, nor ever will; he hath declared, that he loved us when

sinners, but never *as* sinners. His eternal and constant hatred of all sin, and his unchangeable love of all his creatures, are of the nature of primary truths from which the doctrine of the general Restoration may be easily and plainly inferred. In this view we may understand those many dreadful threatenings and gracious promises, made to the same people and persons: both shall be fulfilled; the first, while they continue as rebels, which are designed to humble and subdue them; the last, when they shall have accepted of the punishment of their iniquity; when their uncircumcised hearts are humble, when their stubborn knees shall bow to JEHOVAH, and their former rebellious tongues shall swear allegiance to him.

Does this idea lead to licentiousness, that God hates sin, and determines to pursue it to entire destruction, and never to put up his sword so long as there is a rebel in the universe; yet, at the same time, has no positive hatred to the souls which he has made, but only wishes them to return to order?—This idea appears to me, equally to check presumption and despair; and tends to put an end to licentiousness, rather than to encourage it: for if rebels are assured that their rightful sovereign hates them, and will never suffer them to be reconciled to him, it naturally causes them to fight with tenfold rage, as all warriors will testify: as on the other hand if they believe he is too weak, or undetermined, to conquer them, they will be presumptuous, and continue the war. It cannot, therefore, be affirmed, by any person of reason, that the declaration that God will destroy sin tends to pro-

mote it; or, that his love of order, and hatred of evil, being compatible with his love to the creatures he has made, is a doctrine that encourages men to rebel; the contrary is evident; and yet these are the very grounds of the Universal Restoration; which cannot therefore be licentious.

5. Another of the first principles of the Restoration is, the *immutability of God's counsels;* which he hath confirmed by an oath, "That by two immutable things (*viz.* his word and oath) in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb vi. 17, 18. "God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together (*or* rehead) in one, all things in *Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth even in him; in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh *all things* according to the counsel of his own will." Ephes. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. God is our Saviour (*or Soteros*, Restorer) who will have all men to be saved, (*sothenai*, restored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. This is the will and counsel of that God, who "Doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou ?" Dan. iv. 35. He hath sworn by himself, the word is gone out of his mouth in

righteousness, and shall not return, that unto him "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isaiah, xlv. 23. The counsel of God shall stand; he will perform his pleasure, notwithstanding all the opposition that men can make; God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. If God will have all men to be saved & restored, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, if it is his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to rehead all things in *Christ*, both in heaven and on earth; if he hath sworn that unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear; and if he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and is determined to perform all his pleasure, which he is able to do; and with him nothing that he pleases is impossible. I say if all these things are true, (as who, that believes the Scriptures, can deny;) then, is not the doctrine of the Restoration true? And who will venture to charge that with licentiousness, which God, in the counsel of his will hath purposed, and is determined to perform? We know, that the will of God is a will to all goodness, and that he cannot do any thing unjust or contrary to his holy nature, or inconsistent with his plan of moral government, or that shall tend to promote rebellion; therefore, if God had seen that this great work had been, in any respect injurious to his perfections, character, government, &c. he would not have proposed it; and if he had foreseen that the knowl-

edge of it would have been hurtful to mankind, he would not have revealed it: but since he hath done both, we may certainly argue that it is not a licentious doctrine to declare, that GOD will finally make all his intelligent creatures happy; by making them all his subjects, by destroying their sins, and making them holy, in a way perfectly consistent with all his perfections and attributes; without doing the least injury to his character, or rendering his moral government weak, or making any of his words void, whether threatenings or promises, or in the least setting aside the sanctions of his law or gospel, or a future state of rewards and punishments; without derogating at all from the glory of the Mediator, but rather exalting it to the highest possible pitch without saddening the hearts of the righteous, or diminishing in the least, from the happiness of Heaven, but rather causing it to increase; for if there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there must be more over many, in exact proportion; and as GOD will certainly give greater possible joy to his chosen, & there is no doubt but it will receive addition from every one that is restored, or brought home to himself; therefore, it can only be brought to its highest possible pitch by the *universal Restoration;* which doctrine cannot, therefore, be licentious, as God has appointed and revealed it, and all holy beings (except some weak good men on earth) rejoice therein exceedingly.

6. Another of the principles on which the *general Restoration* is founded is, *that God hath given all things into the hand of Christ*, who hath declared, *that it is the Father's will, that of all*

that he gave him he should lose nothing; and that power was given him over all, that he should give the knowledge of GOD, even eternal life, to all that the *Father* had given him; and that *all*, without exception, whom the *Father* hath given, shall come in such a manner as not to be cast out: But as all these scriptures have been recited, and reasoned upon before, I shall only now observe that as GOD the FATHER hath given *all* things to CHRIST, and as he hath engaged to bring *all* back, without exception, and hath both *will* and *power* to perform this work, and came into the world on purpose to accomplish it, it must of consequence, be finally performed; yet it cannot tend to licentiousness, or the God of Heaven, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, would never have planned it, approved it, or sought to execute it.

Many more first principles, on which the doctrine of the *Restoration* is founded, might be mentioned, and shewn to be far from tending to licentiousness. But I shall mention but one more; and that is— *The Scriptures must be fulfilled; the Sciptures cannot be broken:* None of the words of God can fail of being accomplished; and he hath not only denounced dreadful threatenings, but made many gracious promises to the same people. These cannot be fulfilled together;—and if there is no truth in the Restoration, I cannot see how the *latter* will ever be ful filled at all; and if sins are not punished in the persons who commit them, I am equally at a loss what sense or truth there can be in the *former*. It would be a great task to collect all the texts which justify remark, that threatenings and prom-

ises belong to the same people in different periods, some specimens of which have been given in the course of these dialogues. Now, it cannot lead to licentiousness, to suppose that the Scriptures shall all be fulfilled; but it must lead to infidelity, and all kinds of evil to suppose the contrary.

These are the first principles upon which the doctrine of the Restoration stands, and by which it is supported; and as these have all been considered, and proved to have no tendency to encourage sin, separately, much less can they have any such tendency, jointly; and then it evidently follows, that a doctrine which seems necessarily deduced, or inferred by undeniable consequences, from all these considerations united, cannot be false, or have any evil tendency.

But I shall next proceed to shew, that all true, experimental, and practical religion, seems so consistent with the *universal Restoration*, that it may be reconed a wonder, that all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have diligently practised his commands, have not in all ages been fully convinced of the truth of it.

Friend. Is it possible that you can do this? If so, I hope your reasoning will be attended to; and I must confess, that you have cleared your way so well, by considering the first principles of the doctrine, and shewing that they are very far from tending to licentiousness, that I am half inclined to think you will be able to answer this objection, formidable as it has been considered hitherto.

Minister. As I trust you have been made acquainted with experimental religion, I need only appeal to your own experience, for the truth of

what I advance; and I am apt to think, if you will answer me candidly, to a few questions, you must acknowledge either that the Restoration is true, or that your experience is false.

Friend. I am willing to give you as plain and candid answers as I can; for it will be of no use to deny what the Lord has done for my soul.

Minister. Let me then ask you in the first place, did you not see yourself lost and undone; and that you were vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and totally unable to deliver yourself from your sin and misery?

Friend. I certainly did; and I was sometimes ready to think there was hardly such a sinner on earth as myself, all circumstances considered; for I had sinned against such light and love, that I thought all the world might be forgiven sooner than myself.

Minister. And were you not brought by the power of God, to resign yourself into his hands, without reserve, to do with you, and dispose of you, according to his will and pleasure; being convinced, that he neither would nor could do you any injustice?

Friend. O yes; and then I found peace; my rebellion against God ceased; I looked upon him quite differently from what I did before; I saw that he was wholly right and just, and that I was entirely to blame. My murmurings against him ceased; I viewed him as such a holy, good, merciful, and yet righteous God, that I could trust my soul in his hands, with the most entire satisfaction.

Minister. And when *Christ* was revealed to you as a *Saviour*, how did he appear?

Friend. As one able and mighty to save, even to the uttermost; and I thought there was not only a sufficiency in him for me, the vilest of all, but for the whole world, yea for a thousand worlds, had there been so many. His blood seemed to me so precious, his obedience and sufferings so meritorious, his power so great, his love so rich, boundless and free, that I was overcome with the transporting view. And as I saw in him a fullness for all, so I found in him an infinite willingness to save all: for how could I think otherwise? I knew myself to be most unworthy, and that he had graciously pitied me: I beheld his love, like a river, flowing down to me as free as water; and I was amazed that I had not beheld it before, in the same light. I saw that the love of God to me, did not now *begin*, but was now *manifested* to my soul. I saw that there was no change in God, but all in myself. These words were pecious to my heart at that time. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love;—therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3. As also these; "Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." St. Matth. ix. 2.

Minister. You have brought my own experience to my mind: It pleased God, by an incident too trifling to mention, to bring me to seek earnestly for an unfading treasure; and by a train of circumstances, fixed the concern deeplyupon my mind; and I labored night and day, but could obtain no rest, till one morning—a time never to be forgotten!—as I was walking on a journey, under great distress, and when deliverance seemed farther from me than ever,

all at once I was brought to resign my soul into the hands of GOD, and thus I expressed myself: "Lord, here I am: a poor helpless sinner: I resign myself into thine hands; take me, and deal with me just as thou pleasest. I know thou canst do me no injustice." Immediately these words came into my mind, with great power and sweetness. "In an acceptable time have I heard thee; and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." Isa. xlix. 8. and I had then such a view of CHRIST, as to make me cry out "Glory to God in the highest! This is salvation; I know this is salvation!" Then those passages which you have mentioned, came into my mind with great energy; and I saw the fulness, sufficiency, and willingness of CHRIST to save me and all men, in such a manner as constrained me to venture my soul into his arms; and if I had ten thousand souls, I could have trusted them all in his hands. And O how did I long, that every soul of Adam's race might come to know the love of *God* in *Christ Jesus!* And I thought I could not be willing to live any longer on earth, unless it might please God to make me useful to my fellow creatures.

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
"How sweet their memory still!
"But they have left an aching void
"The world can never fill."

This is a little abstract of what God did then graciously teach me by his Spirit; but I had been brought up in that particular system and in the course of a few years came to be so firmly attached to it, as to refuse, in my preaching, to make general invitations to mankind at large;

rightly reasoning with myself, that if provision was only made for a small part, I had no warrant to call or invite the whole to come and partake; and therefore only pressed the duty on such and such characters, as *hungry, thirsty, weary, heavy laden,* such as were *without money, sensible sinners,* &c. all of which I concluded to be of the *elect,* because I judged the Spirit had begun to operate savingly upon their hearts; and that to these, and these only, the Scriptures directed invitations to be made; never considering that text—"Hearken unto me, ye stout hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness; and it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry." Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. During the time that I remained in this close hearted system, laboring with all my might to maintain it, I chanced to come to a house where, as far as I can judge, was a very sensible and pious young woman, whom I never saw before or since. She gave a very judicious account of the work of grace upon her heart; but when she came to that part, where she said she beheld an infinite fulness in CHRIST for ALL the world, I interrupted her, and told her, that could not be; for there was no provision made for all, and therefore it was impossible that she could have any such discoveries made to her by the Spirit of God. This I insisted upon, according to my system, contrary to my experimental knowledge; (O the mischiefs of bigotry, prejudice, and vain attachment to system!) she, on the contrary, maintained, that she clearly viewed matters in that light; and that she certainly was taught to believe, that in Christ there was a fulness

& freeness for all. This I denied; & she was thereby prevented from finishing what she had begun. I can never forgive myself, for the opposition I made to what I knew to be truth by experience; and as I did not inquire the name of the person, I have had no opportunity of making a recantation by letter, as I ought to have done; and having never been in the place since, and it being highly improbable that ever I shall again, I feel myself extremely hurt, whenever I think of it.

Friend. I can but admire the agreement between us in matters of experience; for I found the same dispositions of mind that you mentioned, when it pleased *God* to reveal his *Son* in me.

Minister. I never found an experienced Christian in my life, but would give much the same account, provided that his system was not in sight; and I have found some, that though they were violently attached to the contrary system, and knew my intention in asking the questions; yet answered the following affirmatively.

Did you not see and feel yourselves the vilest of sinners?

Did you not view the love of God infinitely full, free and unmerited?

Did you not behold in *Christ* an infinite fulness, sufficiency and willingness, to save all, without exception.

Did you not love all, and wish all might come and partake of his grace?

Did you not earnestly desire the salvation of all, not only of your family, friends, neighbors *and* nation; but also of your enemies, and of all

mankind?—Could not you embrace the whole human race in the arms of benevolence?

Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the salvation of all mankind, as for your own?

If you had as much power as good will, would you not bring all to bow to the sceptre of grace, and to be reconciled to *God* through *Jesus Christ*?

Friend. I do not see how an experienced, person can refuse to say yes, to all these questions; they are so agreeable to the very tempers of the new born soul; and, I am sure, I found them in my heart, at the very time when I first tasted of the love of God.

Minister. Well then, my friend, let me ask you, from whence did these tempers and dispositions proceed?

Friend. To be candid, I think they were given me from above, and came down from the Father of lights, from whence, every good and perfect gift cometh; and I am the more apt to think so, because I found contrary dispositions in my heart before; and the more I am sensible of the forgiving love of God, the more I find these affections which you have described, and these desires for the good of others.

Minister. Then let me ask you, can a small drop be larger than the unfathomed abyss, and ocean of love? Have you more compassion towards your fellow creatures than the God that made them? Can any effect be greater than its cause? Would you bring all to submit to God, and be happy, if you could? And will not he, to whom nothing that he pleases to do is impossible, bring all his creatures to be reconciled to

himself at last? He has infinitely more love to his creatures, than all the saints and angels in glory have; he is possessed of infinite power and wisdom, as well as love; all means to accomplish the work are known to him; he can do it in a way that shall cause his praise to abound exceedingly, in a way perfectly consistent with all his perfections, and the whole of his glorious character; it is his will and purpose so to do, as has been proved at large. What, then, can hinder him from fulfilling it?

Friend. I am not able to gainsay this reasoning; it seems almost undeniable. But can you shew that the doctrine of the Restoration stands connected with practical religion, or the keeping of the commandments of God?

Minister. I can very easily do that, in every instance; but shall only attend to the following, as a specimen.

1. Our Lord has commanded us to *love all mankind;* not our brethren and friends only, but even our greatest enemies; and all for this purpose, that we may be the children of our Father who is in Heaven, whose love is universal, and whose tender mercies are over all his works: See St. Matth. v. 44, 48. St. Luke, vi. 27, 36. But if God doth not love all himself, Christ hath commanded us to be *more perfect,* in that respect, than our Father, who is in Heaven; which to suppose, is highly absurd. What shall we say to that doctrine that teaches us, that God hates with a perfect hatred, many of those whom he hath commanded us to love as ourselves?

Therefore, there is nothing in the doctrine of the Restoration, contrary to the love of our

neighbor; which on the contrary is promoted thereby.

2. We are commanded to *do good to all men*, as we have opportunity. This is recommended to us by the example of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust; and no person can say, that the belief of this doctrine tends, in the least, to hinder us from doing good to our fellow creatures; but rather encourages us so to do, from the consideration that God loves them all, and does good to all, and is determined to make them all the subjects of his kingdom at last.

3. We are commanded to *forgive all men their trespasses*, and to pray, saying, "Forgive us our (debts, *or*) trespasses, as we forgive (our debtors, *or*) them that trespass against us;" St. Matth. vi. 12. St. Luke, xi. 4. And our Lord says, "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses;" St. Matth. vi. 14, 15. See also, xviii. 21, 35. St. Mark, xi. 25, 26. St. Luke, vi. 37.

Now, is it possible to suppose, with any degree of reason, that our Lord would command us, upon pain of his highest displeasure, to forgive those whom he hated, and determined to punish while he should exist, without having the least desire or design to do them good? Has he promised us the greatest blessings, if we will forgive all men; and will he never forgive them? He that can believe this, let him believe it. However, since forgiving all men is a plain com-

mand, which none can dény; I trust, no one will venture to say, that believing the final Restoration of all men, at last, will have any tendency to make us break this precept of our Saviour's, upon which he lays so much stress; but, I think, the contrary is evident.

4. We are commanded to pray for all men. St. Paul says, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, or Saviour (or Restorer) who will have all men to be saved (or Restored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man *Christ Jesus;* who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This is the great doctrine of the Gospel, the very foundation of Christianity:—"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle; (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The apostle not only believed, but taught; not only taught, but commanded others to teach and preach this great doctrine, of God's being the Saviour, or Restorer of all men. In this he glorified, saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour (or Restorer) of all men, especially of those that believe. These things command and teach."

Upon this grand foundation, St. Paul recommends prayer to all men; saying, "I will therefore, *that* men pray every where, lifting up holy

hands, without wrath and doubting." 1 Tim. ii. 1, 8. iv. 9, 10, 11.

Observe, the apostle recommends prayer for all men; and wills, that men should pray every where, at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. How nearly forgiving all men, and praying for all men, stand connected! and both are plainly and peremptorily recommended by our Lord, who says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

We are commanded to pray for all men, because it is the will of God that all men should be saved (or Restored) because Christ hath given himself a ransom for all. And we are bid to pray without doubting. O what a world is this! May we, ought we, to pray, for the salvation of all men, without doubting? Surely, God would never have commanded us to do this, unless it was his purpose to restore all men, in his own time; and no man can say, that the belief of the Restoration will prevent our praying for all men.

I was once on a journey, and called in at the house of one of my former good friends. Several religious persons were there; and, after some time, my sentiments came to be spoken of, and they seemed to wonder how I could embrace the opinion, that all men, finally, would be saved! I told them, however many might preach against it, that no person, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, could pray against it; but, on the contrary, we could pray for it in faith, nothing wavering, as God had commanded, and as his *Spirit* naturally inspired; that no person

could pray God not to save or restore all mankind, without being shocked at the blasphemy and impiety of such a prayer; but that our Lord had said, that all things whatsoever we asked in prayer, believing that we should receive, should be granted, let them be things seemingly ever so impossible; that if we asked any thing according to his will, it should be done; and that it was his positive and declared will, that all men should be saved (or restored) and come to the knowledge of the truth; that we were ordered to pray for it in faith, without doubting; and, therefore, it was as evident as the nature of things required, that it would be done; since God had never ordered us to pray for any thing that he was not able and willing to do. This, and much more, I said, and they seemed exceedingly well satisfied; especially, when I informed them, that it was through the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, that the prisoners should be sent forth out of the pit wherein is no water, and that all should be restored through his mediation.

Friend. Then you hold that even the damned shall be finally restored and delivered by the power of Jesus, and through his blood shedding. I have heard it objected against your scheme, that it tended to set at nought the whole mediatorial plan, and to depreciate the blood of Jesus, which he had shed to purge our sins away; though I never observed any thing like this in your discourses, either in public or in private.

Minister. No; God forbid that I should ever set aside the blood that cleanseth from all sin; *nor can I* be charged with it, unless having a *much higher* idea of its merit than my opposers,

may be looked upon as tending to depreciate it. They hold that it shall cleanse a small number from their sins; I believe that it shall cleanse, heal, and restore the whole human race. They believe that its virtue endures for a little season; I maintain that it shall continue to all ages, until all evil shall be destroyed out of the universe.

Friend. I am satisfied that you do not mean to set at nought the powerful blood of the dear Redeemer, but on the contrary, you suppose that your views tend more to exalt it. Pray proceed in your discourse.

Minister. I need not say much more upon this matter. Our Saviour has said, "If any man will do his (the Father's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." St. John, vii. 17. This is the surest rule; practice religion; love, revere, and serve God; love all men, even your enemies; do good to all, forgive all, and pray for all; and then ask, is the doctrine of final Restoration contrary to this manner of life? If it be, reject it; for these commands are plain; and if these principles are inconsistent with the observation of these precepts, then avoid them, as you would death and hell. But, I trust, it has been shown that they have no such tendency; but the contrary. For instance, does this doctrine tend to make us hate God, and his character? Does it naturally fill our minds with selfishness, and prevent benevolence from ruling within us? Does it fill us with pride, and cause us to look down with contempt upon those that are beneath us in life, and banish humility from our hearts? Does the belief of this, cause our

breasts to swell with pale envy, and rancorous malice, at the happiness of others? Does it cause us to burn with hellish rage, fury and madness, against mankind? Does it tend to destroy meekness, and increase wrath? If these questions require (either from the nature of things, or from known facts) the answers to be in the affirmative; then I would abhor such a system, and wish it to be universally detested: but, if on the contrary, the candid inquirer must answer in the negative, and say, that the doctrine of the final Restoration does not tend to produce selfishness, envy, pride, or wrath; but, on the contrary, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" that it causes benevolence, meekness, humility, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, and all goodness, to abound and increase; then it cannot be a licentious doctrine, and is not to be discarded on that account; for it is a maxim with St. John, that "He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." 1 John, ii. 10. That is, he cannot receive, hold, maintain, or do, any thing essentially or materially wrong; and, therefore, can give no just occasion of offence. "For, all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandments, it is briefly comprehended in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the

fulfilling of the law." Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

But it is not only from reasoning, but from facts, that I am able to prove that the belief of the doctrine of the Universal Restoration, does not lead men to sin. The Tunkers, or German Baptists, in Pennsylvania, and the states adjacent, who take the Scriptures as their only guide, in matters both of faith and practice, have always (as far as I know) received, and universally, at present, hold these sentiments: but such Christians, I have never seen as they are; so averse are they to all sin, and to many things that other Christians esteem lawful, that they not only refuse to swear, to go to war, &c. but are so afraid of doing any thing contrary to the commands of Chirst, that no temptation would prevail upon them even to sue any person at law, for either name, character, estate, or any debt, be it ever so just. They are industrious, sober, temperate, kind, charitable people; envying not the great, nor despising the mean: They read much, they sing and pray much, they are constant attendants upon the worship of God; their dwelling houses are all houses of prayer; they walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, both in public and private. They bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. No noise of rudeness, shameless mirth, loud, vain laughter, is heard within their doors. The law of kindness is in their mouths; no sourness or moroseness, disgraces their religion; and whatsoever they believe their Saviour commands, they practice, without inquiring or regarding what others do.

I remember the Rev. Morgan Edwards, formerly minister of the Baptist church in Philadelphia, once said to me, "GOD always will have a visible people on earth; and these are his people at present, above any other in the world." And in his history of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, speaking of these people, he says: "General redemption they certainly held, and, withal, general salvation; which tenets (though wrong) are consistent. In a word, they are meek and pious christians; and have justly acquired the character of *the harmless Tunkers.*"

Thus have I proved that this doctrine is not licentious; both from the first principles on which it is founded, from the nature of experimental and practical religion, and from facts. As to that part of the objection, which supposes this doctrine to be the same that the serpent preached to Eve, saying, "Ye shall not surely die;" it seems almost unworthy of notice. But as it has been glorified in by some writers, as unanswerable, merely because it was passed over unnoticed, as being nothing to the purpose; I shall make a few remarks upon it.

1. I say, that *Satan* was a liar, and GOD was true.—For man and woman did *die*, in a *moral* sense, on the very day that they sinned; they became dead in trespasses and sins; they lost the divine life, and became earthly, sensible, devilish; darkness in their understandings, stubbornness in their wills, and disorder in their affections, rendered them unfit, unable and unworthy to have fellowship with their GOD. But do they contradict JEHOVAH, and join with the serpent who assert, that Jesus, the second Adam,

hath quickened, and is able to quicken, those who are dead in trespasses and sins? If so, St. Paul joined with the serpent, in Ephes. ii. 1.

2. The sentence of death was pronounced upon man, even the death of the body, in those words; "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii. 19. But, would it be just and right for any one to say, that those who believed the resurrection of the body, contradicted God, and joining with the serpent, declared that men should not die; merely, because they asserted according to the promises, that they should rise again? Would not those who preach *Jesus* and the resurrection, have a right to look upon it as a vile and wilful slander, if any one should so misrepresent the matter? What! must I be accused of saying that no man ever died, because I believe and teach that some have risen, and that all shall be raised at last; when the very idea of a resurrection pre-supposes a state of death?

3. I confess, that God has threatened sinners with the second death; but do I say that they shall never taste of the second death, because I declare, that the time will come when it shall exist no more? This is curious reasoning, indeed. As well may I say that no man ever lived on earth, because so many have died; that no one sleeps in the night who wakes in the morning; or that no fish was ever in the water, that was caught and taken out.

Did St. Paul join with the serpent, when he said, "For as in *Adam* all die, even so in CHRIST

shall all be made alive ?" 1 Cor. xv. 22. Will any suppose that we affirm, that the dreadful threatenings denounced by God, never were, nor ever will be executed, because we declare, that his promises shall also be fulfilled ? Can any reasonable man suppose, because Christ is the Saviour of men, that, therefore they were not in a lost condition ? How absurd ! when he declares, that he came to seek and save the lost !

Thus, though mankind died a moral death, in the day wherein they sinned; yet, CHRIST is able to quicken and raise them up from the same; and though their bodies die in consequence of the fall, yet shall he cause all that are in the graves to hear his voice, and come forth; and, by the same rule of arguing, though many shall fall under the power of the second death, which is threatened to sinners; yet as he has promised to destroy all that bears the name of *death*, their Restoration may be fairly concluded, without either contradicting God, or joining with the serpent. Had the Scriptures, indeed, contained nothing but threatenings of *death*, without any promises of *salvation*, *resurrection*, or *restoration;* it would have been presumptuous for us to have entertained any hopes for the human race, or their deliverance, either from *sin*, *death* or *hell;* but, since *promises* are found, as well as *threatenings*, we must not, under pretence or color of believing the *latter*, reject the *former*, lest we are found contradictors and opposers of God; for it is as possible that we may make him a liar, in refusing to believe the record he has given of his Son, and his intentions of grace and mercy towards mankind, as in disregarding his threat-

enings, denounced against them because of their sins.

As for this doctrine making the *hearts of the righteous sad whom* GOD *would not have made sad*, nothing can be more contrary to fact; for if it be the will of God to reward and punish, and finally to restore mankind, none of the righteous will be sorry, but on the contrary, will greatly rejoice. It is not God's truth, but men's lies, of which the prophet speaks; which made the hearts of the righteous sad, and strengthened the hand of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: but we are so far from strengthening the hands of the wicked, and saying, that no evil shall come upon them; that we declare from the Scripture, that "the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." Rom. i. 18. ii. 8, 9. And that "there is no peace to the wicked." Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 20, 21. Therefore, they are called to repent, and turn to God; for in sin they never can be happy; no unholy or unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. And so far are we from promising them life in their wicked ways, that we testify, from the Scripture, that "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life," while he continues in that state: "but the wrath of God abideth on him." St. John, iii. 36.

Friend. I had intended to propose that text as an objection to your system; it is indeed one that Dr. WHITBY* insists much upon: but I see how you will answer it— that the unbeliever, as such, *and while he so continues*, cannot see life; but the wrath of GOD abideth on him, while he remaineth in unbelief; but that God can take away the cause, in his own time, and then the effect shall cease.

Minister. Certainly, this must be the meaning; for St. John only meant to describe the difference between believers and unbelievers, *as such:* but could not mean to intimate, that those who were not unbelievers in his time, should always continue so.

But I now pass to consider the latter part of this objection, upon which I have dwelt so long: viz. that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin, and, therefore he has threatened it with *everlasting damnation*, which must intend *endless misery;* and as this restraint is found too weak, wholly to prevent evil, what amazing increase would there be, if this restraint should be taken off, in any degree; as it must be, if it should come to be known that punishments were only *for certain ages or periods*, and designed for the *amendment* of the sufferers?

I once asked a Reverend Divine what was his strongest argument in favor of *endless punishment?* and he told me, that which is mentioned above; and therefore, as it is of considerable importance I shall give it a brief consideration.

*See Whitby's Discourses.

1. It is not quite clear to me, that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin; and that he always doth so, in all his dispensations.—He sometimes has higher designs in view, than barely to restrain sin; he sometimes, perhaps, suffers it to prevail for a time, that his power might be more manifest in destroying it; hence we read, "Moreover the law entered"—not merely to restrain sin, but—"that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Wherefore, then, serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." Rom. v. 20, 21. Gal. iii. 19. St. Paul says; "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for, without the law sin was dead. Was, then that which was good, made death unto me? God forbid: but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good; that sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful." Rom. vii. 8, 13. Perhaps if the punishment of sins immediately followed the commission of them, it would be a stronger and more effectual restraint than any threatenings of future misery; yet God does not think it necessary to restrain sin by that means, though it is expressly asserted, that, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore is the heart of the sons of men fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. viii. 11. There is no doubt but if the awful punish-

ments of the future state were made visible to our senses, by any means, they would prove a powerful restraint to sin; yet God has not thought fit to restrain it by those, and perhaps many other possible ways. Wherefore I have a right to doubt the premises; for if the strongest possible restraints were laid upon sin, it might not be so consistent with a state of probation, as those reasonable restraints which God hath thought fit to lay upon it.

2. But it may be questioned, whether there is not something in the idea of limited, yet certain punishment, so just, equitable, reasonable and evident, that it is much more calculated to produce belief, and consequently more effectual to destroy false hopes of escaping it, and also to check that daring presumption, which rises out of the idea of *endless misery*, than can be found in the contrary doctrine. *Endless punishment* seems to shock tender minds at least. I heard of a little boy, to whom his mother constantly kept preaching damnation without end, for every sin; one day after she had been discoursing with him in that manner, he went to work, but soon returned back, suddenly opened the door, and with an air of surprise, cried out; "Why, mother, the law says, *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot;* but you say, ten thousand for one, and that punishment shall never end." I have heard of numbers that had no better excuse for sinning greedily, than this, viz. that there was no hopes of their being saved; that, therefore, they were determined to sin as much as possible, since it could make no difference. I have reason to say,

from what I know of mankind, that more persons refuse to believe in Divine Revelation because it is commonly thought to contain the doctrine of endless misery, than from any other cause: And numbers have embraced it immediately upon being fairly convinced that it was not necessary to understand it in that light. And a very sensible Deist once said to an acquaintance of mine, who believed and preached the universal doctrine—"Had I been acquainted with your system, thirty years ago, I should have been a zealous Christian; and as great a friend to Revelation, as I have been an enemy."—"And pray why not now, Doctor?" "Because I am ashamed, having so long been fighting against, to receive it now."

3. Though damnation has been commonly understood to be *endless*, for many ages; yet it has not (as far as we can judge) prevented evil at all, or very little; but I have mentioned before, how very strict those people live, who receive and hold the system of limited punishments; whether it is that *endless damnation* is too unnatural to be believed, and that *limited punishments*, being more reasonable, seem more certain; or whether it be that by considering they shall be punished, either without end, or not at all; and every one thinking that endless punishment is more than they deserve, but is only reserved for some greater sinners, and therefore they have nothing to fear from it, I shall not pretend to determine; but certain it is, that where the idea of endless misery prevails, it has not prevented iniquity, in the measure that might have been expected, on the supposition of its being the truth of God.

4. The great number of Heathens, that die without ever being favored with the light of the gospel, and certainly without ever hearing of endless misery; the many that die in a state of infancy and childhood; together with the instances of idiots, and persons born deaf; all convince me more than any logical arguments that God has many ways of instructing and reclaiming his creatures, in another state that we are at present unacquainted with.

5. It is not so much the intention of God, merely to restrain sin as to shew it in all its dreadful deformity, punish it according to its deserts and finally, to shew the superabounding of his grace, in overcoming and totally destoying it out of his creation; which shall be accomplished when HE that sitteth upon the throne shall make all things new; "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

6. As the doctrine of the final Restoration has been shewn in itself not to have the least tendency to licentiousness, but directly the reverse; and as far as I can learn, by history, or my own observation, those who have believed it, in the manner here laid down, as perfectly consistent with a future state of rewards and punishments, have been particularly careful to depart from iniquity of every kind; yet if any should be so lost to all that is good, as to pervert this truth (revealed for contrary purposes) to their own destruction, they alone must bear the blame, the loss and the punishment. The Scriptures of truth have been perverted; yet that is no argu-

ment against Divine Revelation. The Gospel of the Grace of GOD, has been abused; but should it never be preached on that account? Some in the apostles' days, turned the Grace of GOD itself into wantonness and lasciviousness, (see Jude, 4;) and others pretended that those holy men encouraged sin, by proclaiming salvation to sinners, through grace, or faith in Christ; of which St. Paul complains, Rom. iii. 8. "We be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, let us do evil, that good may come; whose damnation is just." The holy apostle abhored, and constantly denied this horrid consequence, which some perverse minds pretended to draw from his doctrine; he declared that the damnation of such was just, who did sin that grace might abound, or who affirmed that the doctrine led thereto, or that the apostles taught or practised any such things; nevertheless (not as fools, but as wise) they did not think fit to lay the gospel aside, and refuse to preach salvation through CHRIST any more on that account. The self same reasoning applies to the present case.

Friend. I must confess that you have so far prevailed as to silence this great objection; for certainly the belief of the Restoration seems, by your account of it, consistent with a state of grace, and the knowledge and practice of religion. But though you have obviated several objections, there is one you have not yet touched, which is very considerable, and I am doubtful that it will be difficult, if not impossible for you to answer fairly; it may be thus expressed, *God has abounded towards us in all wisdom;* one in-

stance is his hanging out the threatenings of the severest punishments to prevent his creatures from sinning while in this world; but to tell them at the same time, that if they should sin, he means to save them, is not *prudent;* because that lessens, if not destroys the force of his threatening. He told *Adam* that if he did eat he should surely die; but did not tell him (at the same time) that if he should eat his case would not be remediless; this were to take down with one hand what he had set up with the other. After the threatening failed of the effect, he told him so, and not before, this was prudently done; so after his threatenings fail of effect in this state, is the time to reveal his design of saving daring sinners. We may therefore be sure that he has not done it yet, and that we misconstrue those texts which seem to contain such a revelation. The next state is the only state to preach the doctrine, and reveal the doctrine. If you preach it here, it will be unnecessary to preach it in hell; for obstinate sinners will carry it in their heads thither.

Minister. As specious and plausible as this objection seems, I doubt not of being able to answer it fairly, without evading the natural force of it in the least.—The first thing that I shall notice in this objection, is the very different and contrary manner in which you apply those words of the apostle from his first evident intention. *He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in*

one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. Ephes. i. 8, 9, 10. God hath judged it to be the height of heavenly wisdom and prudence to make known to his saints, his glorious purpose, finally to re-head all things in Christ; and we ought not to presume to be more wise and prudent than he. There is no doubt but God hath revealed this great truth more immediately to his saints and faithful ones for their consolation, than for the benefit of the finally impenitent.

It is of amazing, I had almost said of infinite use to the people of God, to have this divine counsel declared to them in the present time.

The knowledge of this truth entirely removes all hard thoughts of God from the minds of those who receive it, as I can testify by experience; for since I have believed in the doctrine of the universal Restoration, I have never had one hard thought of God abiding for one minute in my mind that I remember, and never expect to have any more while I continue to believe it firmly.

The belief of the Restoration is of great use in supporting good people under their sorrows and trials here; the idea that evil shall be destroyed, and all things restored to their primitive glory is the most consolatory of all other ideas. As this doctrine tends to remove the greatest difficulties from the plan of Providence, and also from divine Revelation, it is evident that the knowledge of it must be of the greatest use to all that love their great Creator. And, therefore, if the revelation of it answered no other purpose in this life, but for the happiness, joy, and satisfaction of such as love God, we might be sure that

he hath made it known, and that we rightly understand those passages that hold it forth; for since "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant," Psal. xxv. 14, and "The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," Amos. iii. 7, there is all the reason to conclude, that if God ever intended to restore mankind hereafter, he would not fail to reveal it to his chosen and faithful servants. And this he hath done, if I can understand the meaning of words.

It is true that God did not inform our first parents before they sinned that he had provided a remedy; but not long did he delay after the fall to reveal to them, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;Gen. iii. 15,&this one text contains in miniature all that I believe respecting the Restor ation of mankind; for if the serpent's head is finally to be bruised, his power and influence over mankind, must be entirely destroyed; and then what shall prevent their return to God.

Besides, it is impossible to read the Scriptures attentively, and not perceive that God very frequently mixes promises of mercies among his severest threatenings of judgement; and yet he doth not throw down with one hand, what he builds up with the other.

Your object seems to suppose that the doctrine of the Restoration supercedes and sets aside those punishments which God has threatened to inflict upon the impenitent; or else how does the preaching of this doctrine weaken the force of the threatenings? But this is a very

false idea; for we acknowledge that the threatenings shall be fulfilled, and not that the disobedient shall escape unpunished. There is a great deal of difference between these two ideas, though you would intimate them to be the same, and that we contradict God by assuring the wicked that they shall escape the just judgement of God. But we only declare that an end shall finally come to their punishment, and that when they shall be sufficiently humbled a dispensation of mercy shall succeed that of judgement. Let me ask you, has not God threatened mankind with death on the account of sin? "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. iii. 19. Well, tell me, is this threatening either weakened or destroyed by the knowledge of the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? Did not God threaten the children of Isreal with dreadful judgements to prevent their sinning, and that they should be dispersed among all nations? But will you say that he either weakened or destroyed the force of his threatenings, because he promised them at the same time that at least he would return their captivity, and restore them as at the first, and do better unto them, than at beginning.

The laws of this country condemn criminals to death; would it be thought that I should weaken or destroy the force of the penal statutes, by saying, that the execution of their law could only be felt for a certain time, beyond which it could not endure? Is not every malefactor under the sentence of death supposed to know this? And yet will any presume to say, that these laws are entirely weakened, and their force

destroyed because they do not condemn transgressors to endless punishments? But, if it be allowed that torments, which are but momentary have a considerable influence in restraining many vices, there cannot be the smallest reason to fear that the doctrine of just retribution according to the deeds done in the body, will open the door to vice and immorality, but on the contrary. But this objection is so near akin to the last which you proposed, that it hardly deserves a distinct consideration; for if the doctrine of the Restoration does not lead men to commit sin (as I am sure it has no such tendency) then no harm can be apprehended from its being known in this state. And whereas you argue, that as it would not be proper for the present state, we may be sure that God hath not revealed it; and therefore is highly proper for men to to know in the present state. You will please therefore to notice that the universal doctrine, so far from tending to render the divine threatenings useless or vain, weakening their force, or setting them aside, operates in the direct contrary manner. I as much believe as you or any other man can do, that all the threatenings will be fulfilled upon the finally impenitent; but dare not carry the matter so far as to set aside the gracious promises of God, with which the Scriptures appear to me to abound, in favor of the final recovery of all at last.

Friend. It must I think be confessed that if the doctrine of the Restoration be true, it would be matter of great joy and comfort for good men to know it, for they have often great trouble and anxiety of mind on the account of their

families, friends, neighbors, acquaintance, and mankind in general; which sorrow would be greatly relieved, could they have an idea of the Restoration of all things in the manner you hold it. But however true this may be, it seems not to be plainly revealed in the Scripture, otherwise it would not be hidden from the eyes of so many great and good men.

Minister. It is possible, that a subject may be revealed in the plainest manner, and yet the best of men may remain ignorant of it. For instance, were not the sufferings, death and resurrection of our Lord plainly revealed in the Scriptures of the old Testament? And yet we know that the apostles of our Saviour did not understand one of those prophecies. Nay, when Jesus told them openly and expressly that he must be delivered into the hands of men, and that they should mock, scourge, and crucify him, and that the third day he should rise again, they did not comprehend his meaning; although he spoke to them frequently and very plainly upon the subject, and said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask him of that saying." St. Luke ix. 44, 45. And in another place we read, "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." It is impossible that words should be more express, or less liable to be misunderstood. "But (as the evangel-

ist immediately informs us) "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." St. Mark, ix. 31, 32. And in the same chapter we find, that after our Lord Jesus was transfigured upon the mount in the presence of Peter, James, and John, "As they came down from the mountain he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." Ver. 9, 10. This was what Christ taught them not only plainly, but also frequently. See St. Matt. xvi. 21. xvii. 9, 22, 23. xx. 17, 18, 19. xxvi. 31, 32. St. Mark, viii. 31. ix. 9, 10, 31, 32. x. 32, 33, 34. xiv. 27, 28. St. Luke, ix. 21, 22, 44, 45. xviii. 31, 32, 33, 34.

Yet notwithstanding the plainness and frequency of these predictions, and the pains which Christ took to instil these ideas into them, they never understood them at all until some time after they were fulfilled. For when they saw him taken and delivered into the hands of men, and treated exactly according to his own words often repeated, they were entirely disappointed, and all their hopes seemed to die within them.—And when he was risen from the dead, they would not believe the testimony of those who had seen him, and would hardly trust their own senses, so ignorant were they of what he had told them.

St. John was the first of the disciples who believed that he was risen, for thus he writes, "Then went in also that other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture

that he must rise again from the dead." St. John, xx. 8, 9. This instance is so much to my purpose, and proves so evidently that a thing may be plainly revealed, and expressed in the clearest manner, and yet not be understood, that I hardly need mention any more. But I will mention another, and that is, the calling of the Gentiles. This was spoken of by the prophets, in the clearest language; and Jesus after his resurrection gave a full commission to his apostles, which one would think it was impossible for them to misunderstand.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c. St. Matt. xxviii, 18, 19. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." St. Mark, xvi. 15.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." St. Luke, xxiv. 46, 47, 48. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 8. But the apostles themselves, even after the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were without understanding, respecting the calling of the Gentiles, until St. Peter was taught it by a vision from heaven. See Acts, x.

And St. Paul speaks of this subject as a mystery that was hid from ages and generations, and particularly revealed to him, and not to the saints

in that day. See Ephesians, iii. 1–11. Col. i. 25, 26, 27.

Wherefore, when I consider that the apostles themselves could not for a time see those things to be revealed, which yet were most plainly, fully, and frequently told them, I cannot wonder that many great and good men now should not see the general Redemption and final Restoration of all things plainly revealed in the Scriptures, though to me scarce any subject appears more evident. It gives me now but *little* concern to hear many say, that they cannot see the matter plainly declared in the Bible, since I know that things have been there that wise and good men could not see; and what has happened in times past may take place now; and if I can see for myself this great truth made known, it is enough for me. I am not to inquire, what does this man believe? Or, what shall the other do? I must believe what the Scripture appears to me to teach, and do what I am there commanded, let others believe or do as they may.

Friend. But I have heard some say of you, "How comes this man to know more than all the world? Have there not been many great, wise, and good men in all ages, that have never thought of these things? If this doctrine of the final Restoration of all things had been true, surely our wise, good and learned ministers would have discovered it, and proclaimed it long ago. But the doctrine of endless misery is a point in which they seem generally to agree, however they differ in other matters, and therefore it must be true, and this doctrine of the general Restora-

tion, which this man holds up, almost alone, must be false."

Minister. I am very far from pretending to be wiser than any that have gone before me; and as for this doctrine of the Restoration it was not only believed and preached by the apostles, but many of the ancient fathers who lived in the first ages of Christianity, were bold witnesses for this glorious truth. It is true that when the church of Rome rose to supreme power, the Popes and Councils endeavored to extirpate the *merciful doctors* (as those who believed the general Restoration, were called in derision) and their adherents, but it was not until near the close of the seventh century, that they were able to silence the witnesses for this truth. This, (as well as many other precious truths) then lay hid until the reformation when it began a little to revive, and hath gradually increased ever since. Several great authors have written upon it; many hundreds and even thousands, have believed it, and found comfort and joy therein. Nay, there are many ministers who believe it now as firmly as I do, but do not choose to confess or preach it, for various reasons; and great numbers of private christians enjoy the comfort and happiness of believing it secretly. But put the case that I stood alone in this testimony, yet if upon a fair examination, the Scriptures hold forth this idea, and if all objections against it may be fully answered; why should my testimony be refused on the account of its singularity? God has an absolute right to use what means or instruments he pleases, to manifest his truth, and to fulfil his purposes; and though I am nothing,

and in his sight am less than nothing, yet he is able by the things that are not, to confound and bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

I acknowledge that the generality of the ministers in the present day profess to believe endless misery, though they disagree in other points; and indeed one reason why they fall out so much about other doctrines, is, because they receive this as a first principle, as is very obvious; for were those that believe that Christ died only for a part of mankind, once to give up the idea of endless misery, they would acknowledge the universality of the love of God, and confess that Jesus died for all in the fullest sense. And on the other hand, if those who believe in general redemption, were not so exceedingly tenacious of the doctrine of endless misery, they would not oppose the doctrine of election, nor hold that the will of God might be finally frustrated, and that the death of Christ shall be in vain, with respect to many, and that many objects of the divine love shall finally perish to all eternity.

These inconsistencies in their sentiments, and the contest between them & those who hold partial redemption and salvation, are therefore chiefly, if not wholly owing to both parties being agreed in this most dreadful doctrine of endless misery.

It is beautiful to observe the progress of the glorious gospel, from its opening to our first parents in the garden, down to the present day. I have sometimes mentioned, in public, that the more the gospel is known and revealed, the larger and richer it appears.

It first seemed confined to one family or nation, but later discoveries showed that all nations had a part therein, and all sorts of people were designed to share in its blessings. Now the glorious news begins to be published abroad, not only that all nations, and all sorts of people, but all persons and individuals, without exception, not only *may* partake of its benefits, but *shall* in due time enjoy great advantages thereby.

God always adapts his remedies to the evils that prevail in the world; and therefore he hath opened his counsels to men according to their different capacities, needs, and circumstances. Christianity might, formerly, have been received and sincerely practised, without being investigated at all; but when infidelity rises up and attacks it, as it does in this our age, it becomes the duty of its friends to defend it, by inquiring into its meaning; and laying all prejudices aside, to receive as truth those things which God hath revealed; and the same to vindicate before the world.

It might not formerly have been necessary to understand all the prophecies; and yet now, as the time of their fulfilment draws nigh, they may become more important, be more studied, and better understood; and for this purpose, God may actually illuminate the minds of some to set them forth in a more rational, scriptural, consistent manner, than they have appeared in hitherto. And if it should please God to make any use of my tongue or pen for this great purpose, the glory shall be all ascribed to his name, to whom alone it is due; I shall have nothing to glory or boast of, forasmuch as I can only com-

municate what I receive; and I hope none will refuse to receive the truth, however weak or unworthy the instrument by which God may please to send it.

Friend. If this is the truth which you hold forth, however contrary to the commonly received opinions of the age, I see no reason why men should refuse to hear what you have to say; but I have heard many exclaim against you in the severest manner; and declare that they would not hear you, nor read your writings on any account; and others have said, that they could confute and overthrow your whole system in ten minutes, but whether they would be able to make their words good if they should enter the list with you is another matter, and cannot be determined till a fair trial.

Minister. I can assure you my friend that I should not have the least objection to their making the attempt; for though I am conscious that neither my natural nor acquired abilities, are worthy to be compared to those of many excellent characters who hold the contrary sentiments; yet the goodness of the cause in which I am engaged, inspires me with courage to attempt its vindication, let who will enter the list with me. For when the evidence of this most glorious truth first began to appear to my mind, I was determined never to believe or profess it, until I could answer every objection that could be brought from the Scriptures against it, fairly and without any torturing or twisting the words of truth; and it pleased God so to open matters to my view, as to take every objection out of my mind, and to clear up every doubt in such a

manner, that I have full satisfaction. And I can safely say, in the fear of God, that I am so far from being offended with those who question me upon the matter, and thereby give me an opportunity of answering for myself, that I take it as an act of kindness; and as I stand ready to be reproved wherein I am out of the way, so I shall thank the persons who, in the spirit of love, convinces me of error. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be kindness; and let them reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." But let not the man who would write, dip his pen in gall; nor he that would converse, make his tongue as a sharp sword; but, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts." These are the tempers of mind we ought always to possess; and especially, when we discourse upon the great things of the kingdom of God.

Friend. I have the same desires that you express; and I think it is to the shame of human nature, and a reproach to the innocent cause of Christianity, that religious disputes have been

carried on with such amazing bitterness and acrimony. Men seem frequently to forget that they are brethren; and that they must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. If they remembered these things, as they ought, they would not revile, censure, judge, and condemn each other, as they do: from which evil practices may the good Lord preserve us while we debate this very important subject; for though I am determined to urge every thing that I can with propriety, in the strongest manner that I am able, yet I am willing to stipulate on my part, that if I should use any reproachful or censorious language in the remainder of the debate, I will give you leave to consider it as totally giving up the cause in which I am engaged.

Minister. And I hereby promise the same; for I am determined never to write a page of controversy; unless it can be written in the very spirit of love and true benevolence, with a sincere desire to find and embrace the truth.

The want of this in most controversial writers, has made serious people so weary of controversy, that they will neither read nor hear it on any account; nor can I wonder at it, for such bitterness tends entirely to root out the spirit of true religion.

Friend. I hope we shall shew an example to mankind, how disputes ought to be carried on in love, and in the fear of God, and for the purpose of mutual edification. But as our present discourse has been long and very important, I will take my leave of you for this time, hoping at a future opportunity to have more conversation with you on this so interesting a subject.

END OF THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE IV.

Friend. I am happy to have another opportunity of discoursing with you, concerning that point in which you differ from your brethren, the final Restoration of all things. I have thought much of the subject since I saw you; and though I must acknowledge, that you have answered as far as I can see, some of the greatest objections that I have found in the Scriptures; yet a considerable number remain to be answered, before I can venture to receive as truth, what I have hitherto looked upon as a *dangerous heresy;* and as I have many questions to propose, I wish to make the best use of my time.

Minister. Propose your objections, as freely as you please; and I will endeavor to answer them as briefly, and at the same time as plainly as possible.

Friend. CHRIST threatens the *Jews* with an eternal exclusion from his presence. "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come," St. John vii. 34. Then said JESUS again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go ye cannot come. Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," St. John, viii. 21, 23, 24.

Minister. Do you recollect that our LORD uses words nearly similar to some of these, to his own disciples?

Friend. No, indeed; I do not remember any such like expressions used to them. Can you shew them to me?

Minister. If I do, will you acknowledge the the force of the objection to be removed?

Friend. Certainly, I must.

Minister. Then read St. John, xiii. 33. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you."

Friend. I am surprised that I should never have observed this before—Let me read the passage—Oh! but stop—it is explained in the 36th verse. "Simon Peter said unto him, LORD, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."—But nothing of the kind is intimated respecting the *Jews*.

Minister. Not in that text, I confess; but in many others it is more than intimated, that they shall come to know and love him, yea and to behold him as their friend. I think it is intimated in those words which our Saviour used, in the close of his threatenings to Jerusalem. Behold your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, until the time come when ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," St. Matth. xxiii. 38, 39. St. Luke, xiii. 35. It is more than intimated in these words—"And so *all Israel* shall be saved. For GOD

hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 26, 32. "In Jehovah shall *all* the seed of *Israel* be justified & shall glory," Isai. xlv. 25. "I will call them my people, who were not my people; & her beloved, that was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. ix. 25, 26. "Now will I bring again the captivity of *Jacob*, and have mercy upon the *whole* house of *Israel*; I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them." Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28. "And I will multiply men upon you, (the mountains of Israel) all the house of *Israel*, even all of it." xxxvi. 10. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I, JEHOVAH, have spoken it, and performed it, saith JEHOVAH." xxxvii. 12, 13, 14.

Friend. But this returning from captivity, can only respect such as are alive at that period, when the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, &c.

Minister. That is more than any one can prove; as the expression is sometimes used evidently for the Restoration of such whose bodies are destroyed beyond dispute; as in the case of *Sodom* and her daughters, who were taken away,

by fire and brimstone from Heaven, whose captivity God promises to return, together with the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters, at the same time that he will bring again the captivity of *Jerusalem*, and her daughters in the midst of them. See Ezek. xvi 44, 63; especially v. 53, 55, 61.

Friend. But Mr. Poole's Continuators, as well as many other eminent divines, tell us, that these which you take to be promises, are only dreadful threatenings; and their meaning is this: —I never will bring again the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters; nor the captivity of *Sodom*, & her daughters; neither will I ever bring again the captivity of *thy captives*, in the midst of them; when *Sodom* and her daughters shall return to their former estate, (which is impossible) and *Samaria* and her daughters shall return to their former estate (which shall never be) then *thou* and thy daughters shall return to your former estate; but that time shall never come.

Minister. I know, such is their interpretation, which proves nothing more than the weakness of their cause; for in all this, they expressly contradict God, who, from the 60th verse to the end of the chapter, promises blessings to Jerusalem in the most absolute manner, that he will remember the covenant made with her in the days of her youth, and will establish unto her an everlasting covenant: that she shall receive her sisters, *Samaria* and *Sodom* (called her *elder* and her *younger* sister;) and he promises to give them to her for daughters; not by the first covenant, indeed, but by the new and everlasting covenant, which he will make in those days;

then shall the covenant be firmly established with her; she shall know JEHOVAH; shall remember, and be confounded; and never shall open her mouth in pride any more, because of her former sin and shame, when God shall be pacified toward her, for all that she hath done.

How many promises has GOD made to *Jerusalem*, in the prophecies, of not only bringing her *captivity*, and returning her to her former *estate;* but even causing greater blessings than ever to come to her, and of doing *better* to her than in her beginning, making her an *eternal excellency*, a joy of *many generations*, &c.

It is therefore very surprising, that men professing to believe the Bible, should dare be so bold as to deny these promises, and declare, that God will never bring *Jerusalem* to her former estate! They might, indeed, safely say, that the promises have not yet been fulfilled; but it is too bold to assert, that therefore they will never be accomplished. Were there no other text to prove the Restoration of the Jews who died in their sins, and indeed of the whole fallen race of Adam, should I judge this sufficient;—"*All* that the *Father giveth me, shall come to me;* and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the *Father's* will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day." St. John, vi. 37, 38, 39—Here we find that *Christ* our *Lord*, declares not only that all that the *Father giveth* him *shall come* to him; but *also, that they* shall come in such a manner as

in no wise to be *cast out;* and that such is the *Father's* will, that nothing of all which he hath given to the *Son* should be lost or missing, at that geat day when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, who did put all things under him; and as this is the will of that *God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will* and as Christ has undertaken the accomplishment of this will of the Father, it concludes absolutely and forcibly against the doctrine of *endless misery* and *annihilation.*

Friend. It certainly does, with respect to all those whom the Father giveth, or hath given to the *Son;* but to none else.

Minister. That is all that I contend for; I ground the Universal Restoration of all things, upon these two premises, which I call the *major* and the *minor.* 1. That *all things* are given to the *Son,* without exception. 2 That *all* that are *given him, shall come to him,* in such a manner as *not to be cast out;* and that none shall be missing, lost, or wholly destroyed, but shall be forthcoming, in that great day when *Christ* shall give up the kingdom to the *Father.*

Friend. But can you prove your *major?* I am sensible that the *minor* has been the great foundation upon which *particular redemption,* &c. has been supported; but if the *major* can be proved, it will set the strongest weapons of those who hold *partial decrees,* &c. directly against them, and will give another turn to the argument.

Minister. I can prove the *major* by the same positive expressions as the *minor,* and by more *passages* of Scripture; and you shall judge for *yourself,* whether I quote them fairly, and

whether they can be invalidated by any arguments which will not, at the same time, invalidate the *minor*. I will set down the several texts at large, as they are of great importance.

St. Matth. xi. 27. "*All things* are delivered unto me of my *Father;* and no man knoweth the *Son* but the *Father;* neither knoweth any man the *Father*, save the *Son*, and to whomsoever the *Son* will reveal him."—The very same words are mentioned by St. Luke. See chap. x. 22.

But the most striking passages of this kind are found in the gospel of St. John, iii. 35, and xiii. 3. "The *Father* loveth the *Son*, and hath given *all things* into his hands. *Jesus* knowing that the Father had given *all things* into his hands, and that he was come from *God*, and went to *God*, &c."

God hath moreover said to his *Son*, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psal. ii. 8.

Thus, *all things* are given to Christ without exception. The *major* and *minor* being both proved from Scripture, we may venture to draw this conclusion.

If *all things* are given into the hands of Christ, by the Father; and all that the Father giveth, or hath given, shall come to Christ, in such a manner as not to be cast out; then shall all men be restored.

Here the whole Christian world may unite, without either party being obliged to give up their favorite tenets; and while some strongly contend, and prove from Scripture, that all things

are delivered into the hands of *Jesus;* let others go on to prove, that *all* that the F giveth, shall come in such a manner as not cast out; thus shall the truth be promoted n ally and equally, by those who seem to co dict each other; but neither shall, in that contradict what our Lord hath said.

But as *all things*, or *all men*, without ex tion, are given to *Jesus*, that he might resto bring them back to God, in his own way time; so is he invested with all power, th might be able to accomplish so great a v Jesus spake, saying, "All power is given me, in heaven and in earth," St. Matth. x 18. "For as the Father hath life in himse hath he given to the Son to have life in hin and hath given him authority to execute ju ment also, because he is the Son of man, John, v. 26, 27. Jesus our Lord, has pow quicken souls who are dead in trespasses sins. See Ephes. ii. 1. He himself saith; ily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is co and now is, when the dead shall hear the of the Son of God; and they that hear live." St. John, v. 25. He hath power to all the dead that are in the graves; for he "Marvel not at this; for the hour is comir which all that are in their graves shall hea voice, and shall come forth; they that have good to the resurrection of life; and they have done evil to the resurrection of damn verse 29. But he has not only power to the dead and quicken whom he will; to giv *wards* to them that love him, and to pass *tence of* judgement and condemnation upo

foes, and they that have done evil; but has also power to subdue all things unto himself, to reconcile all things, and to rehead all things in himself. And whatever methods he may use towards mankind, and whatever miseries he may suffer them to feel for their sins, and how long soever the dreadful age of judgement and fiery indignation may last, Christ has given us to understand, in his prayer to the Father, that the power which he hath, was given with a design far superior to this, (though judgement is included) he saith (in that address which for its grandeur, beauty, simplicity, and majesty, never was equalled) "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many (*pan*, ALL) as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," St. John, xvii. 2, 3. Here we see, that this power over all flesh was given him for this grand purpose, that ultimately he might give eternal life; not only endless existence, but the knowledge of God and his Christ, to all that the Father hath given him; which are all without exception.—This is the will of God, that all which he hath given the Son, he should lose nothing; but should give eternal life, even the knowledge of God, which he alone can give, to all, without reserve, whom the Father hath given him; this is the will which Christ came to do, and this he hath power to perform. Now, if he came purposely to do the will of God; and if it is the will of God, that of all that the Father hath given to the Son, he should lose nothing; but should bring all to himself, in such a manner

as that they should not be cast out, and give them all eternal life; and if all, without reserve are given to him, and universal power and dominion are his, for this very purpose; if all these premises are true—as who can deny?—then nothing can be more evident than this conclusion, viz. that *all shall be at last restored.*

"It is written in the prophets, (saith Jesus) and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," St. John vi. 45. If all shall be taught of God; and all that are taught shall come to Christ; and none that come to him shall be cast out or rejected; if all these premises are true (and, I think, they are fully proved) how very naturally the conclusion follows, viz. that all shall be finally brought home to God, before Christ shall resign the kingdom to the Father.

Our blessed Lord is invested with power sufficient to perform this work. It is the will of God that it should be done; Christ came into the world on purpose to begin, and lay a foundation for the same; he hath laid a sufficient foundation, by tasting death for all; one died for all; he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; and he seemed confident that he should be able to accomplish this will of the Father, when he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me," St. John, xii. 32.—He was lifted up from the earth, and therefore the IF is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto himself, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of God to all. *He shall see of*

the travail of his soul and be satisfied. And who can conceive how much it will take to satisfy the capacious soul of the Son of God, and especially after having borne such deadly pains for all?

These passages, my friend, establish my mind in the belief of the final universal Restitution, beyond all hesitation; nevertheless, I would not wish to force your assent, were it in my power, but only to lay before you that evidence which was wrought upon me, and has brought me over, notwithstanding my education, prejudices, former sentiments, custom, the multitude, my interest, my honor, and connexions, were all against it.

Friend. I suppose you know the expositions that are given by the generality of expositors upon all these texts; and it is a fact that thousands and millions of great and good men have read them, many have preached from them, and yet never saw any thing like the universal Restoration contained in them; but if the doctrine be true, and be at all intended to be set forth in the Scriptures, I must suppose that the passages you have mentioned, may allude to it; but I have many objections yet to propose, which must be fairly answered before I can receive it.

Minister. I would choose you should propose every objection that you can, especially those that may be brought from the sacred page; not only for your own satisfaction, but lest any should be led to suppose that objections of the greatest force are purposely kept back, because no solid answers could be found; whereas I am desirous of hearing whatever can be fairly urged from the Scriptures against this view, and make no

doubt of being able to shew, that all may be fully answered.

Friend. What do you think of those passages, where GOD is represented as swearing in his wrath that unbelievers shall not enter into his rest, which are found in Psal. xcv. 11. Heb. iii. 11, 18, 19. Chap. iv. 3, 6, compared with Numb. xiv. Do they not seem to cut off all hopes of the restoration of those who die in their sins?

Minister. By the *rest* that was promised to the children of Israel, which they fortified by their unbelief, we must understand the land of *Canaan*, and not the final state of happiness. For who can suppose, that out of more than six hundred thousand men, besides women, only two will be saved? and that even *Moses* and *Aaron*, those saints of the Lord, will be lost among the rest? For they as well as others, entered not in; because they believed not God to sanctify him before the congregation: (see Numb. xx. 12.) Only *Caleb* and *Joshua* entered into that *rest*, for they followed the *Lord* fully; and they are typical of those who shall follow the Lamb in all ages, so as to obtain a part in the *first resurrection*, over whom the second death shall have no power; they who are called, and faithful, and are *overcomers*, shall reign with Christ on earth during the *Millenium*, which is the *rest* that was pointed out by the land of *Canaan*.

Friend. Is it indeed? We have commonly understood that *rest* which the children of Israel had in the promised land, as typical of Heaven and eternal felicity.

Minister. This cannot be, since it is evident that mighty wars were waged, and dreadful battles fought, thirty-one kings and kingdoms were conquered and subdued by Joshua and the Israelites, after they passed over Jordan; it was not a perfect *rest*, but only a type of that keeping of the Sabbath which remains for the people of God, into which we are exhorted to enter; which is the time when our *Lord*, after having conquered the nations of the earth, shall reign for a *thousand years*, before the second resurrection; but as many of the Israelites may be saved in the day of the Lord, whose carcases fell in the wilderness; so, likewise, shall the names of many be found in the book of life, at the general judgement, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, who were not worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. These passages, therefore, conclude strongly against *those*, having a part in the first resurrection; but nothing against the final Restoration, which is a state far beyond, and belongs to another dispensation.

Friend. This is quite a different comment from what I ever heard before; but allowing this objection to be answered, I have another in my mind, that appears very difficult, and I should be glad to know what you can say upon it; it is drawn from Isaiah, xxvii. 11—"For it is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favor." How can they ever be restored, if God will not have mercy upon them, nor shew any favor?

Minister. If we did not understand these words with some limitation, it would be as difficult to reconcile them with other passages of Scripture, as with the doctrine of the Restoration; but if we only limit the time, all is easy; "He shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;" nevertheless it is added, "but mercy rejoiceth against judgement," James, ii. 13. The way I answer all these threatenings, and shew them to be consistent with that boundless mercy of GOD, that is over all his works, is, to shew that both wrath and mercy have their season; that *anger endureth* but a moment, but that *mercy endureth forever;* which glorious declaration is expressed more than forty times in the Scriptures; and that God frequently threatens the greatest judgements, and promises the greatest mercies, to the same people and persons. "Thus saith JEHOVAH, thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up; thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased.—Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee." Now, who would not think, from reading these words, that these people were in a most hopeless state, beyond *the* reach of mercy; and that it was in vain *even for* them to seek it? And yet the very

next words speak a language directly contrary. —"Therefore all they that devour thee, shall be devoured, &c. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith JEHOVAH; because they called thee an outcast, saying, this is *Zion*, whom no man seeketh after." See Jer. xxx. 12, 17. I could justify this observation by hundreds of passages wherein God threatens his people with judgements the most severe, and declares—that his eyes shall not pity, nor his arm save; that he will visit their transgressions upon them, will utterly cast them off, and will not have compassion on them at all; and then such promises of mercy break out as are sufficient to astonish every one with their greatness. But time would fail to quote them at large. GOD, by Hosea, says, "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. For ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." And then immediately says, speaking of a time to come, "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, "Ye are the sons of the living GOD." See Hosea, i. 6, 9, 10.

The whole prophecy, indeed, seems of a piece with this specimen. In the second chapter it is said, "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms." Then he goes on to pronounce many dreadful threatenings; but the chapter closes with the most amazing *promises of* mercies to the same people, under

the similitude of a wife that had been rejected, and after a long time received again. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in unrighteousness, and in judgement, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them who were not my people, Thou are my people; and they shall say, Thou art my GOD;" See Hos. ii. 2, 4, 19, 20, 23.—Thus the objection admits of a fair and rational answer; and I have been the larger upon it, because I judged it of great importance to clear it up thoroughly; but more passages upon this subject are needless, or I could easily produce great numbers, that speak the same purpose.

Friend. You have seemed to come over this objection rather better than I could have expected, but I must beg leave to ask you, what you do with that passage; Psal. xlix. 19. "He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light?"

Minister. I render the words *gnad natzah*, "until subdued and overcome, they shall not see the light, *or* until the age, or a certain period, they shall not see the light." The same words are used in Job, xxxiv. 36, where they are rendered "*unto the end.*" "My desire is, that Job may be tried never; *or*, may never be tried." This would be inconsistent with the nature of things, as well as a contradiction in the words *themselves*; for first to say, "My desire is, that *Job* may be tried," and then to add words that

mean *never*, is quite ridiculous even to suppose; but render the words, unto a time or *period*," or as they will bear, "until he be subdued or overcome," and the meaning is both plain and benevolent; but to wish him tried forever, world without end, would be a most malevolent wish —and to wish him tried *never*, would be nonsense.

Friend. This translation is very different from that which we commonly read, in which the text appears a very formidable objection indeed; for if they shall never see the light, they cannot be restored.

Minister. The word *never* is sometimes used in our translation, in such a manner as to oblige us to understand it in a limited sense, as has been proved before; Lev. vi. 13. "The fire shall ever be burning upon the alter, it shall *never* go out;" and in several other places.

Friend. I must allow that the words you mention seem very strong and absolute, but the very reason of things obliges us to limit their meaning to a period or age; but where no such necessity appears we must understand such words in the most absolute and unlimited sense.

Minister. I think there is as abundant reason from Scripture to limit the time of punishment as any thing whatever; as I trust will appear in the course of our conversation, for which purpose I shall be glad to hear all that you are able to urge against the doctrine of the Restoration.

Friend. The next objection I shall bring is from Job. xxxvi. 18. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; *then a great* ransom cannot deliver thee." By

which we understand that after death there is no deliverence, no, not even by that great *ransom*, the blood of Christ.

Minister. This would be one of the strongest objections that you have advanced yet, if the words *a great ransom*, had any allusion to the blood of the dear *Redeemer*, and if it could be fairly demonstrated, that it can have no power over the dead; but I apprehend, when you read and consider the text, context, and similar passages, you will see that no such thing is intended.

Job had frequently wished for death in his trouble and anguish, (as many persons foolishly and wickedly do, that have never felt the tenth part of his afflictions) for which *Elihu* justly reproves him, in these words; "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee from death and the grave; from being cut off by the hand of heaven, justly provoked by the rashness: "Will he esteem thy riches?" Will he account thy great riches a ransom for thy life?—"No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength." Wouldest thou give ever so much of the precious ore to ransom thy life, it would be unavailable; or, shouldest thou trust in thy strength of body or mind? shouldest thou plead the readiness of thy wit, the strength and greatness of thy judgement, memory, and other faculties; thy benevolence of disposition; thy usefulness in life; thy numerous connexions; the great honors that await thee; wert thou a monarch, and couldest thou command armies and valiant hosts, strong *and mighty*; all these things would be totally *disregarded* by God, if he, provoked by thy rash-

ness, should give thee thy wish, and issue the death warrant against thy life; therefore, considering these things, "Desire not the night (of death, and especially sudden death) when people are cut off in their place; and there is no remedy, no ransom, no discharge in that war; from which neither power, wisdom, might, riches, honors, wickedness, nor even virtue can deliver. "Take heed, regard not iniquity;" do not sin in any wise, and especially do not rashly wish for death; which is very presumptuous and heaven daring; "for this thou hast chosen, rather than affliction." See Job, xxxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21. This is evidently the plain meaning of the text, and is confirmed by Psalm xlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. —"They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption."—But though the power of wealth, wisdom and strength, are not sufficient to buy a short reprieve from death; yet the power of God is able to ransom therefrom, and to redeem from the grave, or hell, as I have noticed before; and which is expressed in the last mentioned Psalm, in the following terms; "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me," verse 15. And by the same parity of reasoning, that the power of the Highest is able also to redeem or ransom the bodies of men from the grave, after they have perished there; he is able also to redeem *souls from sin* and misery, if it be his pleasure,

and by the blood of the Messiah's covenant, to send forth his prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water, not even a drop to cool the tongues of those who are tormented there. I have therefore no doubt, but, the blood of Christ is able to redeem to the uttermost, and is sufficient to destroy the power of sin, death and hell. Nothing in the text on which your objection is founded, can depreciate the merit of that cleansing, all-powerful blood, by proving that it cannot be effectual to lost souls.

Friend. But have you forgot that the Scripture says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be?" Eccl. ix. 10. xi. 3.

Minister. No; I have not forgot that such passages are found in the Bible; and I believe they were written with a design to make us diligent, and wisely to improve our time and talents; and that we should be liberal in giving alms, which seems especially to be the meaning of the last, if we may judge by the connexion in which it is found, and without which I am not able to say what it intends. But, in this case, they do not appear to me to be any thing to the purpose, one way or the other; and yet no Scriptures are more frequently brought than these against the doctrine of the Restoration of all things; but commonly accompanied with some additions; *such* as—"There is no repentance in the grave; *nor* pardon offered to the dead." "And as death *leaves* us, so judgement finds us."—Words that

have never found in the Bible; but were they repeated ever so often, could not affect this argument; since the general Restoration cannot happen till long after the last judgement, and will not be wholly completed till the time of the creation of the new heavens and earth, wherein righteousness alone shall dwell.

We all know, that the grave is a place of inactivity, where there is no work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom; and it is a state to which we shall soon be brought; and, therefore, we ought to be diligent and industrious now: but those who believe in the immortality of the soul, will not undertake to prove from these words, that it has no knowledge, or wisdom, after it leaves the body; since many of them say, that the soul knows much more in one hour after that event takes place, than in the whole period of its existence before. And as for those who believe that man dies wholly, and sleeps in the grave until the resurrection, they can never bring this text with any consistency against the final Restoration of all men; because, let what will be the state of things in the grave, nothing can prevent our Saviour from raising all at last, and changing them finally for the better, if such be his pleasure. I might, therefore, just as well attempt, from the vii and xiv chapters of Job, to prove, that there shall be no resurrection of the dead from their graves, notwithstanding the numerous promises of that grand event; as any person to prove, from these and similar passages, that all men shall not be finally restored; since what is said in those chapters seems ten times more against the former, than any thing

that can be urged from these is against the latter. The doctrine of the general resurrection of the just and unjust; and a state of rewards for the former, and punishments for the latter, according to their works; and also the subjection, final reconciliation, and reunion of all things in Christ, are all expressly revealed, and are made the subject of prophecies, threatenings and promises; and are all truths, that cannot be overthrown by any reasonings, as they are plainly declared by God himself.

The Scripture, in abundance of places, highly recommends liberality; and, in the most positive manner, assures the bounteous, that they shall be blest. I need not recite passages to prove, what is so universally known and confessed. Solomon, therefore, having given many excellent precepts to direct us in other matters, comes to exhort us to be bountiful and liberal, in distributing to the necessities of others what God has blessed us withal; saying, "cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall towards the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Thereby intimating to us, that as certainly as these plain common observations are true, (than which nothing can be more so) shall they who bestow liberally upon the poor and needy, be rewarded; since God has promised *and he* will perform? See, upon this subject, *Deut.* xv. 10, 11.—Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3. cxii.—Prov.

xi. 24, 25, 26. xiv. 31. xix. 17. xxii. 9.—St. Matth. vi. 3, 4. x. 42 —St. Luke vi. 38. xii. 33. xiv. 12, 13, 14.—2 Cor. viii. 9.—1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19—and many other places.

Solomon then goes on upon the same subject, and intimates to us, by two striking metaphors, that if we wait till no difficulties appear in our way to hinder us from performing our duty, we shall never reap the blessing; and after giving us to understand that GOD has many secret ways of working, far above our comprehension, and can therefore bless and reward us in many ways out of our own sight, or the view of others, and yet no less certainly than children are conceived, nourished, and receive life in the womb, we know not how; he comes to give us a warm and pressing exhortation, to be constant in doing good to all, according to our power; and to be so far from concluding that to be lost that we thus bestow, that we ought to consider alms as seed sown in a fruitful soil, and should, with patience, wait for the glorious harvest, when, through the divine blessing, we may expect to reap an hundred fold.

All this is plain and easy: but how any text in this beautiful chain, should ever have been thought to have any allusion to the state of souls departed, or brought as a proof that no alteration can take place after death, I cannot conceive. But, allowing it to have any relation at all to a future state, it cannot then in the least disapprove, that very material changes may happen to souls in the spiritual world; since a tree cut down by its owner, lies not long in the same position in which it falls, but is applied to various

uses, according to its fitness and his pleasure.—But as this is nothing to the purpose, I think I have taken too much pains here already; and I should have said little or nothing upon this part of the objection, were it not continually urged, as though the whole controversy turned and terminated upon this allusion, than which nothing seems farther from the meaning of the text; which, in its true sense, appears to be this—that as certainly as full clouds must empty themselves upon the terraqueous globe, and that every thing is *what it is, and where it is*, and no where else; and as a tree falling to the south, does not fall and lie to the north; and, *vice versa*, so, with the same certainty, shall liberality be blest and rewarded.

Friend. I have nothing to object to what you have said upon the text; it appears natural. I formerly thought it indeed, that as persons were laid in the grave, so they should rise, and that there could be no change after death; but I am fully convinced, that this belongs not to the subject. But there is another passage, in the book of Ecclesiastes, (chap. ix. 4, 5, 6.) that I should be glad to hear your opinion of:—"For to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know, that they must die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever, in any thing that is done under the sun."

Minister. It is evident that the wise man, in this and many other of his observations, only considered things with respect to the present life, without any regard to a future state. In this view, his declarations are consistent with truth; but in no other. Let the following serve as a specimen.—"No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath," ver. 1, 2.——Nothing could possibly be more false than these observations, applied to a future state, though they are generally true in this life; for if there are no future rewards and punishments, no state of retribution hereafter, there is an end to all religion. But he does not finally leave the matter so; but makes a most excellent conclusion to this book; saying.—

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear (*or* revere) GOD, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil, chap. xii. 13, 14.

Thus it is plain, that a living dog is better, (more useful in this world) than a dead lion; which is no longer capable of doing good or evil; that a man when he dies, loses all hopes of enjoyment in this life, and is rendered incapable of exercising the functions of it any longer; has no more a *portion* in any thing belonging thereto.

Thus, in fine, all the observations that can be fairly made, upon this and similar passages, belong entirely to the present state of things; and therefore, do not at all affect the argument, either one way or the other.

Friend. This is so plain, that nothing can be more so; but our Saviour's words (St. John ix. 4.) deserve a particular consideration. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work;" —which is explained commonly of the night of death, when no more works can be wrought.

Minister. Our Lord was diligent in his labor, he constantly went about doing good; he was never idle; he was in haste, till he had finished the work which his father had given him to do. In this he was—as in every thing else—a glorious pattern and example for us! And, O that we might follow him! Now we may feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; may take in the stranger, relieve the distressed, visit the sick, the fatherless, widows and prisoners in their affliction; may bury the dead, and constantly perform works of benevolence and mercy, while we remain in this state of our existence; which if we here neglect, we never can perform at all, and of consequence, never can obtain the rewards which are promised to the obedient; but as it is not the state of rewards and punishments that we are now discoursing about, but a state beyond—even the Restoration of all things; neither is the dispute about *what men* can do after this life, but what God

can do, or what he has purposed to do with and for them, in the ages to come, after the dreadful sentence is past; whether they shall be left under the same, *while God exist;* or whether they shall ever be restored; or whether they shall be annihilated; this, you know, is the state of the question; some hold the *first* and others the *last;* but I am apt to think both these opinions are extremes, and therefore judge it safest to maintain the *second,* which I take to be the medium here.

Friend. Indeed I am convinced, that no circumstance preceding the general judgement, can affect the argument; because we are informed, that the condemnation of the wicked shall be at that day, when God will render to them according to their deeds, and will say to them, *Depart from me,* &c.—But the following texts of Scripture form a strong objection to the universal Restoration, which I would wish you well to consider.

"The expectation of the wicked shall perish; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.—He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape; and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost. His confidence, shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. For what is the hope of the wicked, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry, when

trouble cometh upon him? He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of unjust men perisheth. Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind: when distress and anguish come upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of JEHOVAH. They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices," Prov. i. 28. Job, viii. 13, 14, 15. xx. 27. xi. 20. xviii. 14. xxvii. 8, 9. Prov. xxix. 1. xi. 7. 1. 24—31.

These, and abundance of other similar passages, declare the future state of the wicked to be desperate, without hope; they and their hopes perish together, as the spider's web; they have no hopes or prospect of being redeemed; they can look for nothing but judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour them as stubble fully dry, and as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Solomon says. "The expectation of the wicked is wrath," Prov. xi. 23. "*As he* loved cursing, so shall it come unto him; *as he delighted* not in blessing, so shall it be far

from him. As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment; so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones." Psal. cix. 17, 18. Indeed he can have no hopes, when he considers that he hath neglected so great a salvation all his life; that he hath set at nought God's counsels, despised his reproofs; that when his CREATOR called to him to turn, he had no ears to hear his voice; and therefore, when sorrow shall overtake, tho' he may cry, he shall not be regarded of God; and though he may seek, he shall not find; the Master of the house having risen up, and shut to the door, all knocking for entrance is in vain, even though such were to plead for admittance in the most earnest manner, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" he shall answer, "I know you not whence you are;" and though they may reiterate, and expostulate, saying, "We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," he shall not be moved, but shall say to them, "I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity—There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out." St. Luke, xiii. 25, 26, 27, 28.—See also St. Matth. vii. 21, 22, 23. xxv. 11, 12.

Minister. These are awful warnings, indeed; and were they attended to as they ought to be, would be sufficient, one would think, to deter men from their evil ways. I am glad that you have stated them in this most striking point of *light; for* though they form no real objection to

my views of God's dealing with men, as I understand the Scriptures, they are an insuperable bar to the opinions of those who deny a future state of retribution, which I think impossible for them to answer fairly. I shall, however, notice briefly, some things in this collection of Scriptures, in order that my sentiments may appear in their true light.

1. All the hopes of the wicked, ungodly, and hypocrites, shall perish at their death.

Perhaps they hoped to have lived long, to have enjoyed health, wealth, pleasure, and all worldly good, for many years; to have seen their children for many generations, flourishing for a long time on earth; but death destroys these hopes.

The hypocrites might have hoped that they should have been accepted with God, on the account of their birth, parentage, profession, rank among the people of God, observation of the externals of religion, &c. &c. all of which vain hopes do certainly perish at death.

The profane and wicked infidel, and practical atheist, might have hoped, either to have ceased to exist, or to have found some way of escaping the threatened punishment; but death destroys these hopes also.

2. Whatever may be the final intention of God towards these miserable creatures, it is evident they are shut up in a state of keen tormenting despair, or dreadful suspence, and may be fully persuaded that they shall never be released, *of* which it is likely they may not have even the *most distant* hope, or the least degree of knowledge—but, on the contrary, be in fearful expectation *of* more terrible punishment hereafter.

3. As they have lived and died in sin, their destruction, or misery, is certain—and there is no remedy that can prevent their experiencing the consequences of their crimes, and suffering the just punishment which shall be inflicted on them, according to their different deserts.

4. They who live and die in rebellion against God, will be eternally deprived of the glories & honors of the kingdom of *Christ*, which otherwise they might have possessed; will be excluded from a share in the first resurrection, and will be exposed to suffer the torments of the second death; which all must inevitably suffer, who remain incorrigible till the great day of judgement.

5. As God hath called, and they have refused, it is but reasonable to suppose, that they in their turn, shall cry in vain yet nevertheless, though he may long delay, he may hear their cries, and deliver them at last. See Psal. cvii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

David, in his Psalm xxxivth, says, "The face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Our translators not understanding, or not entertaining an idea of the future Restoration, add, "*The righteous* cry, and JEHOVAH heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Whereas the Holy Ghost has put no such words as *the righteous* into the text there; but after saying, that the face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to destroy them out of the world, and to make them forgotten, and their names to cease upon the earth, it adds, a word that signifies *Crying*, and then says, "And JEHOVAH *heareth*, and delivereth them out of all their

troubles;" See ver. 16, 17. This seems indeed like the doctrine of the Bible, which elsewhere says, speaking of the notoriously wicked; O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood; and as the flame setteth the mountain on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded, and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish. And they shall know (as the Hebrew word signifies, and as it is rendered in the old translation) that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." Psal. lxxxiii, 13, 18. Here we see, in a beautiful and clear manner, that one grand design of God in bringing judgements, and even what is called utter destruction, upon men, is that they may know that he is JEHOVAH, the true God; and there are but few intelligent Christians, but must in some measure, be able to conceive hopes concerning all those to whom the knowledge of God is promised.

Though the threatenings in the prophecy of Ezekiel, both against the Jews and other nations, are uncommonly severe; yet they frequently close with this gracious promise—"And they shall know that I am JEHOVAH," or something similar; as will evidently appear to those who will be at the pains of examining the following passages in that book:

EZEKIEL, vi. 7, 10, 13, 14. vii. 4, 9, 27. xi. 10, 12. xii. 15, 16, 20. xii. 9, 14, 21, 23. xiv. 8. xv. 7. xvi. 62. xx. 12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44. xxii. 16.

xxiii. 49. xxiv, 24, 27. xxv. 5, 7, 11, 17. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22, 23, 24, 26. xxix. 6, 9, 16, 21. xxx. 8, 19, 25, 26. xxxii. 15. xxxiii. 29. xxxiv. 27. xxxv. 4, 9, 12, 15. xxxvi. 11, 23, 38. xxxvii. 6, 13. xxxviii. 23. xxxix. 67, 22, 28.

Friend. But does not punishment harden and inflame offenders instead of softening and humbling them? As we read Isa. viii. 21. "They shall curse their King and their God, and look upward;" and in Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory. And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores; and repented not of their deeds."

Minister. Punishment to a certain degree, inflames and enrages, in a most amazing manner; but continued longer, and heavier, produces a contrary effect—softens humbles, and subdues. When Ephraim of old, bemoaned himself, he said thus:—"Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned: for thou art Jehovah, my God." Jer. xxxi. 18. The metaphor here used, expresses in a most lively manner the different effects of the same discipline, in its beginning, progress, and end. When a bullock first has the yoke laid on his neck, he frets, tosses, and rages exceedingly; but by a continuance of the dicipline, he is subdued, brought down, humbled and tamed, so as to become the most useful and gentle of animals. *The sons of* Zion are represented as lying "all

the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net; full of the fury of Jehovah, the rebuke of God." Isaiah. li. 20. A wild bull, in a net must be a furious creature; so are men when first they are brought under the Divine correction. But God knows how to correct men, in such a manner as to bring them to submit to him, in due time; and though some are so sunk in sin as not to be reformed, by any means in this life: yet that is no argument, that God is not able to subdue and bring down the proud and most rebellious in another state, by means that may be used effectually there, though they could not be used here. God says, by the prophet to Israel, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. So will I make my fury towards thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee; and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry." Ezek. xxiv. 13. xvi. 42. Some sins are so daring and presumptuous, as to provoke God to threaten, that they shall not be purged away in this life; and, perhaps their malignancy may be so great, that nothing that can be used here is able to subdue them. Thus, when God threatened his people, of old, with destruction, they turned his threatenings into ridicule; instead of weeping, mourning, baldness, and girding with sackcloth, to which God called them; there was nothing but "joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine.—Let us eat and drink, *for to-morrow* we die. And it was revealed in *mine ears*, by Jehovah of Hosts, surely this

iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith Jehovah, God of Isreal." Isai. xxii. 12, 13, 14.

Thus, punishments are designed for the humbling of the proud; but if they fail of answering that purpose, as administered in the present state, they will be continued and incresed in future periods, to such a degree, as shall bring all down in due time. Those pains which produced that rage, and blasphemy, which you mentioned, were all poured out on hardened sinners in the present life; and were so terrible and severe as to produce those fearful effects, but not sufficiently so as to produce the contrary.

That punishment, to a certain degree, produces rage, but to a certain degree beyond, produces submission; may be illustrated by the following fact, as well as many others, of the same nature.

In the former war between England and France, there was one Mr.————, of Virginia, who was wagon-master-general in the army of the Provincials. He was guilty of abusing his power, by frequently striking the soldiers with his wagon whip. Complaint being made, a court martial was held, and he was sentenced to receive five hundred lashes; which sentence was executed upon him. When he first began to feel the lash, he was exceedingly enraged, and cursed those who had thus sentenced him; swearing that if he lived to be released, he would kill them all, if possible; for that he valued not his life in the least, but would revenge this disgrace, by killing them, wherever he found them; and much *more* to the same purpose. But, before

he had received half his punishment, he declared, that he had not the least disposition to lift his hand against them; he saw clearly that they had acted right; that he had been entirely to blame; and that his punishment was just. After his correction was over, he was led quietly away, entirely cured of all his rage; from which he was as much freed by his punishment, as ever an effect was produced by a cause. He was healed of his wounds, and, I think, restored to his post. Some time after the war was over, he was passing one day over those mountains in Virginia, commonly called *The Blue Ridge;* and there he met alone one of the men who had condemned him, in the court martial, to such a punishment. He put him in mind of it; and told him that it was now in his power to retaliate upon him. The other acknowledged that he was in his power; but added, "M———, you know you did wrong, and deserved the punishment you received; and if you kill me, I declare, that we did right in sentencing you to be whipped; I should do the same, were it to do again; and so would you have done, had you been in my place." Mr. M——— acknowledged the truth of it; and was so far from fulfilling his threatenings, that he suffered him to go in peace, highly commending him for his conduct. Mr. M——— may be still living; he was a general in the American army during the late war, and acquired great honor, for his valor and good conduct.

This I think is an argument *ad hominem.* I have often observed instances of the same nature, *in a less* degree; and I think it must be ad-

mitted, that although a certain degree of punishment will inflame, harden and enrage; yet farther degrees produce quite contrary effects. Nor is punishment the only thing in nature that produces contrary effects, according to the quantity used; almost all things do the same, thus water with a little salt in it, will cause putrefaction, much sooner than perfectly fresh water; but let it be saturated with salt, and it will preserve bodies that are cast therein. A little salt cast on the earth is good manure, and causes fruitfulness; but a greater quantity produces the contrary effect, by causing barrenness. A little wine refreshes, cheers, invigorates; but taken to excess, stupifies and intoxicates. And, to mention no more instances, a little smattering of knowledge puffs up the mind; but a greater degree, humbles and brings it down: From whence,

"*Drink deep, or never taste the spring.*"

Friend. But let me ask you: when you view the miserable state of fallen men, the inveterate obstinacy of their wills, the total aversion that many have to God, and goodness, their confirmed habits of evil, their amazing love of vice, their opposition to every method taken to reclaim them, and a thousand other dreadful circumstances, which you must have observed; are you not ready to despair of their recovery; not for any want of goodness in God, but through their total incapacity of ever being made better.

Minister. I must confess, this objection has great weight; and I have often been ready to give *up my own* salvation, on account of the

evils of my own heart, which sometimes rise, and prevail in such a manner, as almost drives me to despair; and I can find no relief but by flying to Jesus, as my only refuge, and trusting in his promises; and the case is the same with respect to the Restoration of all men. My weak reason tells me, that it cannot be; that it is absolutely impossible, that such hardened rebels can be so changed to eternity, as to become willing and obedient subjects; but when faith prevails, it informs me, that the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God; that nothing is too hard for Jehovah; and that he hath said—"Behold I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me?" Jer. xxxii. 27. And the example of Abraham has often proved a great support to me in this case; "who, against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be; and being not weak in faith, he considered not" the impediments, which, to the eye of reason, rendered the accomplishment of the promises improbable, if not impossible.—"He staggered not at the promises of God, through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20, 21.

This is the only way I answer this objection to my satisfaction—God hath sworn, that to him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, Isaiah xlv. 24.—That in the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth; and that

every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 10, 11. That it is the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulnes of the times, to gather together, or rehead, in one, all things in Christ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him, Ephes. i. 9, 10. And having made peace through the blood of his cross, he is determined to reconcile all things unto himself; whether things in heaven, or things on earth, Col. i. 20. —That he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, Ephes. i. 11. That he will have all men to be saved, or restored, & to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 6. That the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands, St. John, iii. 35. And that Christ hath said, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." St. John, vi. 37. When I consider these, and many such like promises, which I find in the Scriptures; and that he that hath promised, is able to perform; hath wisdom, power and goodness, sufficient to accomplish all his words, how difficult or impossible soever the matter may seem, to our carnal, vain and weak reasoning; I cast the whole of my concern upon him; judging that he is faithful, who hath promised, and that, in his own time he will fulfil all his purposes, and all his promises. But I confess to you, that it requires a faith, if possible, more strong than that of Abraham, to believe the doctrine of the Restoration steadfastly, in the midst of so much

evil as prevails in the world, and which seems to render it impossible: but my only hope is in God.

But, to encourage us the more, there are not only promises of what God will do, but examples of what he hath done, recorded in Scripture, as the cases of Manasseh, Nebuchadnezzar, Mary Magdalen, Saul, and many of the murderers of our Lord, priests, and even Pharisees, are left on record, as patterns of God's long suffering, power, mercy and love. And I would advise those christians that doubt of the Universal Reconciliation of all things, to remember St. Paul's words to the Collossians, on this subject, chap. i. 21. "And you that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled;" as a proof and example of his power to reconcile all things. Let all remember that their own stubbornness; and then instead of reviling and deriding a truth which God has revealed, they will adore him, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Rom. xi. 36. Dan. iv. 35.

Friend. But allowing that God has power to change the hearts of the vilest of men, is not the exercise of that power evidently limited? For I find it written in Rev. xxii. 11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is *righteous*, let him be righteous still; and he that *is holy*, let him be holy still." By these words

it seems to be intimated, that the characters of both the wicked and the righteous, shall at some period be so confirmed and fixed, as to admit of no change or alteration.

Minister. This appears to be a considerable difficulty, but can by no means overthrow the system of the Restoration, which seems established upon many gracious promises. The words seem to refer to a particular period, even when the Lord shall come, and shew that his coming will not (as some suppose) change the characters of men; but that all shall continue for a certain time, in the same character as before. But though he that is unjust, shall be unjust still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still—during the age of judgement; and shall have the dreadful curse pronounced upon him; for, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema Maranatha;" that is, accursed, the Lord cometh, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Yet I trust I have proved, that the vilest shall be finally changed; and consequently, that these words must be understood with some limitation. And thus though this text is plainly contrary to the opinion of those who suppose that all the human race shall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven at the day of judgement, yet it may well be reconciled to the system laid down in these Dialogues; especially if it can be proved that similar expressions are used, where a limitation is supposed, or necessarily implied.

Friend. Yes; if you can find similar expressions used for limited times, it will be satisfactory.

Minister. St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 38. "*But if any man be ignorant, let him be igno-*

rant." But we can hardly suppose that he meant without limitation. So we read of the Jews, that "God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." And David saith;—"Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them. Let their eyes be darkened that they should not see, and bow down their back alway," Rom. xi. 8, 9, 10. These expressions of their remaining in a blinded, hardened, and reprobate state, are stronger than those—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, &c. for, instead of *still*, the word *alway* is used; and yet we are informed, that this "blindness in part has (only) happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved." And that "God hath concluded them all (or, shut them up together) in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," even all whom he had shut up, or concluded in unbelief. And, as I observed before, David says; "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Jehovah. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that they may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth," Psalm lxxxiii. 16, 17, 18. Many other similar passages might be mentioned; but these may suffice, to shew, that often where the words *let it*, or *let them be*, in such and such a state, they only intend a certain period, *until* another dispensation takes place. As for *righteousness*, holiness, and happiness, they have *quite a different* foundation from sin and impuri-

ty, as I have shewn before: and therefore, no arguments used in favor of the total destruction of evil, can, in the least, prove, that goodness, which is the divine essence, shall cease: but the contrary: and those who are firmly joined to the Lord, and have continued with him through the state of temptation, shall never cease to be righteous, nor be separated from their Head, from whom they shall derive eternal life: for Christ hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." St. John xiv. 19.

Christ, at his coming, will bring every hidden *thing* to light, and shall take off all disguises: so that he that is unjust, shall appear unjust: and he that is filthy, shall be discovered: hypocricy shall be no more. "The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful," Isai. xxxii. 5. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked: and between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. The judgement of God is according to truth, and, is designed to make an entire discovery of all persons, and all secret things, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19. But though judgement has its great use in discovering, laying open, convincing and condemning: and punishment in destroying, subduing and humbling: yet the powerful, saving grace of God, and the operation of the Divine Spirit, must have the glory of restoring, or creating men anew: and the blood of Jesus must cleanse their souls from the guilt and pollution of sin. Evil must be *destroyed out of* them: this is done by afflictions.

and goodness must be restored: this is done by God's renewing power and grace.

But the objection may be answered another way, without any of this reasoning by considering the subject comparatively. Thus; as God only is holy; as none are good but he, in an absolute sense; as he putteth no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in his sight, and his angels he chargeth with folly; (See Job xv. 15. iv. 18.) and as all intelligences, compared with him, are unjust and unclean; so, those who have lived and died in rebellion against God and in the pollution of sin, may remain unjust and filthy, compared with the saints, those vessels of honor and glory, who have purged themselves. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man therefore, purge himself from these (sins) he shall be a vessel of honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2. Tim. ii. 20. 21. Here we may observe, that in our Lord's great house there shall be divers vessels of various kinds, yet all useful, but some more highly so than others: that honor and dishonor are comparative terms: and that the way to become vessels of the highest honor at last, is to purge ourselves from iniquity while on earth, by obeying the truth. For it must appear evident, from the nature of things, that there will always be an immense difference between those who shall be kings and priests to God, and those who shall be subdued in the ages to come, so as to be subjects, but who shall not attain to that honor and

glory, which they shall have who suffer with Christ here, and shall be glorified with him hereafter.

Friend. Since I have conversed with you I must acknowledge that many things have appeared in a different light from what they did before; and if I do not wholly embrace the doctrine of the Restoration, I must allow that there is much more to be said for it than I could have immagined. But I have still some difficulties that I wish to propose. There is a terrible threatening which is indeed the last in the Bible, that I should be glad to hear your thoughts upon, which is thus expressed, (Reve. xxii. 18, 19.) "For I testify unto every man, that heareth the words of this prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." But I can almost foresee how you will answer this; that though the plagues that are written in this book, shall be added, yet mercy shall finally rejoice against judgement; though a man's part may be taken out of the book of life, and he, in consequence, suffer the torments of the second death; yet, as a time will come, when there shall be no more death of any kind, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; his Restoration may be certainly inferred; and though his part in the heavenly city may be forfeited, so that he may never become one of those who shall reign

therein, nor yet have a constant dwelling there; he may, nevertheless, enter as a worshipper, and a subject of the great king; and may drink of the water of life; feed on the fruits of the life, and be healed by its leaves; and be one of the happy inhabitants of the earth, which God will create.

Minister. Yes, my friend: but though this Scripture may be easily reconciled to the plan laid down in these dialogues; it contains such threatenings as are very terrible indeed: and should make us exceeding careful not to contradict what God hath here revealed, by adding vain interpretations of our own, contrary to the sense of the text: nor in any wise to explain away or weaken, the force of either the threatenings or promises, set forth in this wondrous book. The amazing torments which they shall feel that have these plagues added to them, and the dreadful loss which they shall sustain that have their part taken out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, cannot be even conceived: and it being possible to forfeit this glorious portion entirely, and for ever, made St. Paul warn the Hebrews in such a solemn manner as he doth throughout he whole epistle.—Oh, what affecting advice is the following!—"Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright. For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited *the blessings*, he was rejected: for he found no

place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears," Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17.

"Poor Esau repented too late,
That once he his birthright despis'd;
And sold for a morsel of meat,
What could not too highly be priz'd.

"How great was his anguish, when told,
The blessing he sought to obtain
Was gone, when the birthright he sold;
And none could recal it again!"

Thus, though Esau, as well as Jacob, was blessed concerning things to come: (See Heb. xi. 20) yet their birthright, and the particular blessings connected therewith, he lost forever: and so it is possible that we may lose our parts in the holy city, or no such threatenings would ever have been made. For it is a maxim with me—that God never warns where there is no danger to fear: and never encourages us to hope, where there is no possibility of obtaining.

As the glorious and universal deliverance of all men from the bondage of sin, and their obtaining an inheritance in the new earth, was clearly pointed out by the great year of Jubilee, under the law: in which every servant went out free, & every man returned to his possession, and to his family: (See Lev. xxv. 10.) So, the possibility of being cut off from the holy city, for ever, was pointed out by that notable exception, ver. 29, 30. "And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: within a full year, he may redeem it. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then *the house that* is in the walled city shall be es

tablished for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the Jubilee."

Something similar to this may be found in Rev. iii. 11.—"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown:" and the 5th verse is also worthy of consideration—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life: but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."—O, what promises are made to overcomers! That they shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God: shall have a crown of life: and shall not be hurt of the second death: shall eat of the hidden manna: shall have a white stone, and a new name, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it: shall have power over the nations, &c. even as Christ received of the father: shall walk with him in white: shall be esteemed worthy to be companions and friends of God: shall be clothed in white: shall have their names enrolled among the followers of the Lamb, as called, chosen, and faithful: shall be confessed by the Son of God, before his Father and the holy angels; shall be made pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out; shall have the name of God written upon their foreheads, and the name of the holy city, New-Jerusalem and Christ's new, heavenly name: shall sit with him upon his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with the Father, upon his throne: shall inherit all things: shall be call-

ed the sons of God: see Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26, 27. iii. 4, 5, 12, 21. xvii. 14. xxi. 7.

The apostle assures us, that "If (we are) children, then (we are) heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." And then adds—"For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 17, 18. "When Christ, who is our life shall appear; then shall ye (his saints) also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 4. "We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is." 1 John, iii. 2. But let none of those who believe themselves the heirs of this kingdom, &c. dare to indulge themselves in sin, under a notion that God can never cast them off: as some do.

A preacher whom I once knew, encouraged this wickedly presumptuous disposition so far, as, openly to say: "God cannot damn me: He can as soon cease to be God, as he can cast me off: even though I should sin ever so much. If I should kill a man, he could not damn me: nay, if I should kill all the men in the world, he cannot damn me."—This man was rigid in trifles, religiously scrupulous in frivolous things, such as dress, &c. yet he made traffic of the human kind, engaged in war, and performed acts of cruelty and outrage with as little tenderness as may be imagined! He long bloated himself with a notion of God's peculiar favor—but near the close of his life, the displeasure of the Almighty coming visibly upon him, the *rhapsodist* changed his

tone, and exclaimed, that God had forsaken him!

I would advise all men, of that bold, presuming, selfconfident spirit, to read and consider well those words, in Jer. xxii. 24. "As I live saith JEHOVAH, though *Coniah*, the son of *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand; yet I would pluck thee thence."

Consider, first, who speaks, Jehovah: He not only speaks, but he confirms his threatening with an oath; and because he could not swear by no greater, he sware by himself, by his own life; "As I live, saith JEHOVAH, tho' *Coniah*, the son of *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah," though he is of the family of *David*, with whom I have made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; and though he is anointed king over my people; I will not spare him; yea, though he "were the signet upon my right hand; yet would I pluck thee thence." Signets, upon the hands of ancient Persian monarchs, were those seals with which their decrees were sealed and confirmed; so that no man could reverse them. Now, God declares, that if this man was ever so dear, and as necessary, to him, as the signet on the right hand of a king is to its owner; that though he was not able to govern his kingdom without his assistance; though he had been the dearest and most useful thing; he would entirely cast him off, for his transgression. And how much more so, if it be considered, that no man is necessary to God; that man cannot be profitable to him; that neither our wickedness can hurt him, nor our righteousness benefit him: (See Job, xxii. 2, 3. xxxv. 6, 7, 8. Psal.

xvi. 2, 3.) And he threatens to punish the only family that he had known on the earth, for all their iniquities, Amos, iii. 2. What have not those to fear, who have been placed in high stations, entrusted with precious treasures, great abilities, opportunities, &c. and have abused them!—Let such read, and seriously consider; Luke, xii. 42, 48. Matth. xxiv. 45—15. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.

Friend. These considerations are, on one hand glorious and sublime, beyond conception; and, on the other, terrible beyond description. But some say, that if they are only admitted in to the kingdom of God, and are not cast into the lake of fire, it is the highest of their ambition; that they never aspire to be kings and priests; nor to obtain a crown, throne, sceptre, &c. And others say, that if they are ever, to all eternity, to be delivered from their misery that it is a matter of little consequence to them whether they are followers of Christ here, or not.

Minister. These kind of reflections are frequently thrown out by the enemies of the Restoration, to cast an odium upon the doctrine But if they were to hear a man say; "If I am just suffered to enter into this kingdom, and am not condemned as a rebel, it is all I wish; I desire neither the riches, honors, pleasures, conveniences, nor even the necessaries that many of the inhabitants enjoy; all I ask is to be exempted from the pain and shame of public punishment." And another was to add—"I can see little or no difference between being made hier apparent to the crown, possessing all the *privileges,* honors, dignities, &c. of a prince of

the blood; and being hanged, drawn, and quartered, for high treason; since even the punishment, painful and shameful as it is, must come to an end;" I ask, would they not esteem both these men in a state of insanity, or worse; entirely devoid of all sense and reason? Yet, this unreasonable language, is not worthy to be named in the same day with that which you mentioned. The difference is so great I cannot find language to express it. I therefore consider all such persons as madmen, with whom it is not worth while to reason; who understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Friend. So they appear to me. But the system you have laid down appears equally calculated to check presumption and despair, and to cure all such spiritual madness; provided that they will attend to it.—But what will you say to the doctrine of *annihilation*? *That* may not be liable to the same objections as *endless damnation;* and so the wicked may be punished with *everlasting destruction,* and destroyed, soul and body, in hell; and yet, at last, all beings that are in existence may be made happy. The Scripture seems, in many places, to favor this idea; and the works of nature seem to confirm it. For instance; many fruits and animals perish, before they arrive at perfection; and why may it not be so with the souls and bodies of men? They are no where said to be raised to corruption, or immortality; but to be destroyed, to be cast into the lake of fire, to be burnt up, root and branch; to be consumed, devoured, burnt up *as chaff,* thorns, &c. I need not mention *particular texts;* because the general part of the

threatenings in the Scriptures run in that style. And I have sometimes of late reasoned with myself, that the second death must end either in the Restoration or annihilation of those who were cast therein; for there seemed something in endless misery, that surpassed my belief, at times. But I could not satisfy myself whether the wicked would be finally restored to some degree of happiness, or totally destroyed; and was apt to think the latter, as it seemed a strange figure of speech to call *destruction*, Restoration —Pray, have you ever thought upon this matter?

Minister. There are but three possible things that can befal those that are cast into the second death; either *endless misery, total annihilation* or *Restoration;* a fourth cannot be thought upon; and but one of these can be true. Now, where there are only three possibilities, of which only one can be true, and one must be true; there are these two ways of discovering the truth; first, if two of the propositions are proved to be absurd, the third must stand: 2dly, if one be proved true, the others must fall to the ground of consequence. I have taken the second method; and having shewed that the doctrine of the Restoration is not absurd, and therefore that it is true; consequently, the others are false.—But, besides this way of arguing there are three circumstances which prove to my satisfaction, that *annihilation* is not a truth.

1. That at the very time that the wicked are destroyed, they are said to be tormented with fire and brimstone; and that they have no rest, *day, nor night,* and the continuance of this is

for no short time, (as would probably be the case if the intention of God was only to destroy them out of being) but for the age of ages. Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

2. They are put to shame and perish, that they may know the Lord as I have noticed before. See Psal. xxxiv. 16, 17. lxxxiii. 16, 17, 18—and the observations I have made upon these passages in the dialogues.

3. But that on which I dare venture the whole cause, is, that God hath absolutely promised to restore and bring again those whom he hath utterly destroyed.

Friend. Can you prove that? For if you can, it will settle the whole controversy.

Minister. I trust I can, in many instances. But I will fix upon one that is full to the purpose, and is unexceptionable; and that is the case of *Sodom*, and her daughters, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboim;* who, "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 7.

As they are set forth for an example in their punishment, so also in their restoration; for we may certainly argue, that if any of the human race shall be annihilated, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, &c. will be; as they were condemned with an overthrow, and made an example to those who should after live ungodly. 2. Pet. ii. 6. But these wicked nations shall have their captivity returned; shall return to their former estate; and shall be received by *Jerusalem*, as daughters in the everlasting covenant: *Jerusalem* and her daughters, more wick-

ed themselves, than *Sodom* and her daughters, shall be restored at the same time; shall remember their ways and be ashamed; shall never open mouth any more to glory over the meanest of mankind; when the great JEHOVAH shall be pacified towards *Jerusalem*, for all that she has done, and towards *Sodom* and *Samaria*, for all that they have done also, inasmuch as they shall return from their long captivity, and be given to *Jerusalem* for daughters: See Ezek. xvi. 53, 55, 61, 63.

Now, by Sodom and her daughters being returned from their long and dreadful captivity, we must understand one of the three things: either, first, the return of their descendants; or, secondly, the restoration of the land whereon the cities stood; or, lastly, the restoration of those very persons who were destroyed.

It cannot be the first; for there are none of their descendants remaining on earth; all were destroyed by fire and brimstone; none of the inhabitants escaped, Lot and his daughters excepted; who were only sojourners, and were the descendants of Terah and relations to Abraham.

As it cannot be the first let us try the second. A very ingenious gentleman supposes, that in the time of the Millennium, the Dead Sea shall be turned into land, and shall again become a beautiful well watered plain, and be given to the posterity of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob:* For he argues, and seemingly very justly, that as God promised *Abraham* all the land which he could see from the place where he then stood; (see Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 16, 17) and as the plain of *Sodom was in* sight, it was included in the grant:

and though the Dead Sea now occupies the place where those cities stood; yet God's promise cannot fail; and therefore, in the Millennium, the Dead Sea shall be swallowed up, and the place shall become a fruitful plain. But whoever will read Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, may plainly see, that the waters that shall issue out from under the threshold of the holy house, shall be brought into the Dead Sea; and shall so heal those deadly waters, that they shall become fruitful, and bring forth fish in great abundance; exceeding many; like the great sea, which is now called the *Mediterranean;* which fish shall be more useful for food, to the innumerable inhabitants that shall then be in that happy country, than all the vegitables that would grow there, even though the whole place was turned into a fruitful garden.

Friend. But are you certain, that by the *sea*, is meant the *Dead Sea*, or *Lake of Sodom*?

Minister. Yes. 1. Because all the other waters in those parts, produce great plenty of excellent fish; and therefore, need not healing. 2. Because fishers shall stand upon the banks of the sea, from Engedi even unto Eneglaim, places that are well known to be contiguous, to the Dead Sea; one of which is nearly at the north-east corner, the other at the west end of the same. 3. The marshes, and the miry places thereof, shall not be healed; but shall be given to salt, as specimens of what the whole is at this time; which barren and deadly spots shall remain, as standing evidences of the truth of Scripture, and the exact fulfilment of prophecy.

Thus, as *Sodom* cannot be restored in her posterity, there being none remaining on earth; neither shall the Dead Sea be turned into land, in the Millennium; it follows, as the only remaining sense of the return of Sodom's captivity, that those very inhabitants, who were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven, shall be restored to a state of felicity. And thus, both the doctrine of *annihilation* and *endless damnation*, fall to the ground at once.

Friend. But as it is the second death, after the day of judgement, that is to destroy the bodies and souls of the wicked in hell; perhaps, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Samaria*, and *Jerusalem*, may be restored before that period, and may not be cast into the lake of fire.

Minister. It is evident by our Saviour's words, (for we must not contradict any part of the Scriptures) that this will not be the case; for he saith, that it shall be more tolerable for the land (*that is*, the inhabitants) of *Sodom*, in the day of judgement, than for the cities where his gospel was preached, and his miracles wrought, and yet the inhabitants remained impenitent: See St. Matth. xi. 24. x. 15. St. Mark, vi. 11. St. Luke, x. 12. From all which passages it is evident, that the inhabitants of *Sodom* will be condemned in the day of judgement, and punished in the lake of fire; and though their misery will not be so great as that of the inhabitants of the cities where our Saviour preached, and performed his mighty works; yet they will be miserable in that day; and, consequently, the return of their captivity is not to be expected, till after the creation of the new earth. Therefore, it is plain, that

the lake of fire is not designed to annihilate those who are cast therein: since all that are not found written in the book of life, at the day of judgement, will be cast into the lake of fire. They whose names are in the book of life, will be happy. The inhabitants of *Sodom* will be miserable, in some degree; therefore, will not be found written in the book of life; consequently, will be cast into the lake of fire. They will be restored; their captivity shall be returned; therefore the lake of fire shall not annihilate them. They are set forth for an example in their punishment; and consequently, in their Restoration.—I need not pursue this argument farther. It appears evident to me; and till it be fairly answered, I shall add nothing more.

Friend. I lately read a sermon written by one Mr. B———, in which the writer brings many strong reasons for the eternity of hell torments, most of which have already been mentioned and answered in these Dialogues; but he makes use of one which has not yet been brought under our consideration, which is, that the damned are under the necessity of constantly committing fresh sin, and therefore as they will always continue to sin against God, so of necessity their punishment can never cease. Have you ever thought of this?

Minister. Yes, I have frequently heard it mentioned, but as it appears totally void of all foundation in the Scripture, it hardly deserves any notice. The objections that I feel myself concerned to treat with seriousness and respect, and candidly to answer, are those which appear to be drawn from the book of divine Revelation;

but if I must attend to all those which the ingenuity of men might raise against the doctrine of the Restoration, I should not only have a very hard task, but should never know when I had done, and besides the discourse would dwindle into trifling and conjectures, very unsuitable to the nature and importance of such an awful serious subject. I must observe, that this objection is nothing but a rash ungrounded assertion, or bold conjecture, without the least foundation either in Scripture, or reason, and if I was to assert just the contrary, I cannot see why my assertion would not be a sufficient answer. Nevertheless, lest it should be thought that any objection can be raised, that cannot be fairly answered, and that I, knowing the strength of this, would willingly evade it, I will say a few words upon it. The Scriptures universally hold forth the idea, that men will be judged, condemned, and punished according to the deeds done in the body. God will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. ii. 6. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2. Cor. v. 10.

"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes," St. Luke, xii. 47, 48.—These, and all the passages that speak of future punishment, constantly hold it forth as a just retribution for the evil deeds done in this life; but never inti-

mate any thing of what this objection holds forth, of punishment being continued *ad infinitum* for crimes committed hereafter. Besides, it is plain that punishments or corrections are intended to stop men from sinning, and under the divine agency to take away their sins. "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin," Isai. xxvii. 9. This is universally allowed to be the design of troubles and sorrows in the present life and why not in the next state also? The Scripture says nothing to forbid ths idea, but much to encourage it; particularly that awful passage where the prophet says, and it was revealed in mine ears by Jehovah of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts." Isai. xxii. 14. If then iniquity shall be purged away after death, it is certain that men shall not always continue to sin in a future state, for they must cease to commit iniquity, before it can be purged away. And though their punishments may at first cause them to rage, (as we see is frequently the case in this world) yet they continue until the most stubborn shall be entirely subdued and humbled.

Friend. There is another argument of this same kind, viz. that is not founded upon any particular text of Scripture, which is directly contrary to the one you have been answering, which I have formerly thought unanswerable in favor of the doctrine of endless punishment, which is the *infinity* of sin, being against an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulness, and justly therefore deserving infinite punishment. Sin is a crime of infinite magnitude, because

God is a Being of infinite majesty and perfection.—Every crime justly demerits punishment proportioned to its malignity! and consequently every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. No mere creature can ever suffer an infinity of punishment in any limited duration. It follows therefore, that a sinner deserves to be eternally punished. Farther, every man is under infinite obligations to devote himself to the service of God, his infinitely glorious Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. To violate an infinite obligation is to commit a crime of infinite malignity. A crime of infinite malignity, deserves infinite punishment. Can it ever be proved then that everlasting, or endless punishment is not the proper desert of a life of sin? I have often said, that this argument, trite and common as it is, never was, nor ever would be fairly answered: nevertheless, I am willing to hear what you have to say upon it.

Minister. As this argument, is often urged, as of the greatest weight, and as you have stated it in its greatest possible force, I shall endeavor to answer it fairly and particularly.

If sin is infinite, then we must ascribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which strikes me as something absurd, if not something worse; sin, a privation, an act of a worm, infinite? Actions must, in my opinion take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects. Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude require infinite power to perform them. If sin is of infinite magnitude, goodness is more so, as deriving a power from God to the performance of it. But if you grant that David spoke in the

name of the Mediator in Psalm xvi, you may be at once furnished with a proof, that even goodness, in the highest state in which it ever was exhibited in the world, was not considered as of infinite magnitude by the great performer. "Thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight," verse 2, 3. If acts of goodness were of infinite magnitude they must extend to God, but the speaker, in these words, be he who he may, David or Christ, was careful to let us know that he did not conceive his acts of goodness infinite. And if acts of goodness are not infinite, it would be absurd to call evil actions infinite, which proceed wholly from the creature.

I grant indeed that there is a passage of Scripture which mentions the word infinite as belonging to sin and iniquity, but then it is mentioned in such a connexion as shows it to be used as Josephus frequently mentions it, for a very great multitude. And thus it is used by many good authors, who certainly do not mean to use it in the first and proper sense of the word. The sacred writer, in the passage alluded to, takes particular care to guard us against any such idea, as though sin was of infinite magnitude, or even virtuous and righteous actions, which approach far nearer to infinity, as having their source from the fountain of infinite goodness. For Eliphaz says, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it gain

to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgement? Is not thy wickedness great? And thine iniquities infinite?" Job, xxii. 2, 5. And language very similar to the above is used by Elihu, "If thou sinnest what dost thou against him? Or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man," Job, xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

These expressions, if they teach any thing, I should think, expressly declare, that no actions of men can by any means be of infinite magnitude, in the sense in which we commonly understand that word; though their numbers and magnitudes may be so great as to be styled infinite, as the word is sometimes used.

You assert in consequence of your ideas of infinite sin, that every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. If the case be so, does it not tend entirely to take away the distinction which God hath made between sins of infirmity and sins of malice, sins of ignorance and sins of wilfulness, lesser and greater sins? All sins are offences against God, and if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, how can any be greater? and thus the distinctions are entirely destroyed, and, all sins will be esteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

If every offence against God demerits infinite punishment, then it will follow, that God cannot

render to any according to their ways, nor punish them as their iniquities deserve, unless they are doomed to endless misery; what then will become of all those threatenings where God threatens to punish people for all their iniquities, and yet to shew favor to them afterwards? This is impossible upon your plan, for none can ever receive all the punishment due to their sins, during numberless ages. Yet if the word of God be true he can deal with transgressors as they have done, and yet be gracious to them afterwards. "For thus saith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith Adonai JEHOVAH." Ezek. xvi. 59, 60, 63.

Here is an instance to the purpose of those whose sins were of the deepest die, and to whom God threatens to deal as they had done, and to punish them for all their numerous and aggravated transgressions, and yet to remember mercy for them afterwards, and to be pacified towards them for all that they had done. All which things would be absolutely impossible, according to your ideas. In many other parts of Scripture God promises to render to transgressors according to their works and ways, and yet to be afterwards gracious unto them. And in one *place*, at least, where God is declaring the great *mercies which* he will manifest unto the children

of Israel in returing them to their own land, and causing them to dwell safely therein he says, "And first, I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin *double;* because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things." Jer. xvi. 18. What do you think of this? If every offence is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, which can never be fully executed, then how can God punish a people for all their iniquities, and do to the greatest sinners as they have done, yea, and recompense their iniquity, and their sin *double* first, and then be gracious unto them, and love them, and be pacified towards them afterwards? And the prophet Isaiah says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the LORD'S hand DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS." Isai. xl. 1, 2. Here a fact is said to be accomplished, which upon your scheme can never be done to all eternity; for if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, none can ever have received *single* for one of their sins, far less double for all.

And therefore nothing can possibly be more evidently contrary to Scripture than your trite and common argument, that as every sin, is of infinite magnitude, so it justly demerits infinite punishment, which as no mere creature can bear, must necessarily subject all who are recompensed according to their own doings to endless misery.

Besides, if I was to grant you, contrary to Scripture, reason, and common sense, that every offence is of infinite magnitude, and naturally deserves infinite punishment, how would you prove from that, the certainty of endless misery? Do you make nothing of the reconciliation which our Lord Jesus Christ has made for all sinners and for all sins?

Let me ask you seriously, did not Christ make a full and complete offering and propitiation for the sins of the whole world? Is it not certain that his merits were far greater than the demerits of all mankind? Is he not the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world? If Christ died for all men, without exception, as you grant, and removed all their iniquities, and bore them away, and reconciled all to God by his death while they were enemies; much more as he has paid so great a price for their ransom, he will recover them out of their lost estate, & save them by his life. "Where sin abounded, grace did (or shall) much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 20, 21.

I conclude, that let sin be ever so great, the grace of God is greater; and if you will have it that sin is of infinite magnitude, I hope you will not deny the propitiation of Jesus Christ, which he made for all sins, the same character. Therefore if you magnify sin, and insist upon the greatness of its demerit, I will endeavor to magnify the all powerful Redeemer, above it and speak of his power to redeem all the human race

for whom he shed his blood. And then you will gain nothing in favor of the doctrine of endless damnation, by all your arguments founded upon the infinity of sin. Christ being far more infinite to save, than sin can be to destroy; and as he has undertaken to redeem and bring back those who were lost, there is no danger of his failing to perform it.

Friend. I must confess that what you have said on this head entirely convinces me, that we cannot found the eternity of punishment, upon infinity of sin; and you have given me more satisfaction upon many points in these conversations than I ever expected to receive. I am indeed at length almost persuaded to receive your sentiments, though I once thought that it was impossible to answer all my objections yet you have gone far towards it. Nay I cannot at present recollect any thing material, but what you have answered. I would not be too hasty in adopting this system, but after your example consider it well. But there is certainly something more grand, beautiful, and harmonious in this view, than can be found in any other scheme; for both the other systems end in darkness and black night, one in endless damnation, and the other in gloomy annihilation. But on your plan light rises out of obscurity, and a glorious day succeeds the darkest scenes. This view of things sets the Book of divine Revelation in the most pleasing light, and appears, for aught any thing that I can see, consistent with the Divine perfections. But why, since you believe the universal Restoration, do you not men-

tion it more freely and fully, in your public discourses?

Minister. On the other hand, some ask me, Why do you ever mention it at all in your sermons; since it is not essential to salvation to believe it? To them I give these answers.

1. St. Paul declared to Timothy, that this Universal Gospel of God's being the Saviour, or Restorer of all men, but especially of those that believe, was a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; and that they labored and suffered reproach, because they trusted in God, as the universal Saviour. But he was so far from being ashamed of this belief, that he said to Timothy, "These things command and teach," 1 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 11. And so am I determined to do, at proper opportunities: notwithstanding the reproach and contempt awaiting me for so doing.

2. Though it is frequently said to be a matter of little or no consequence, if true; yet if it be any part of the record God hath given of his Son, (as I think I have proved) we are in danger of making him a liar, if we believe it not: See 1 John, ver. 9, 10, 11.

3. Though you may be Christians, and not believe it; yet I cannot; though once I could also. But now the evidences of its truth appear so plain to my mind, that it would be criminal in me not to believe it; and since I do believe it, would it not be highly dishonest in me to deny it? I have never done so yet, when asked; and God forbid, that I should be ashamed to publish, what he has commanded to be made known.

4. I have commonly acted merely on the de-

fensive, and I never should, that I know of, have preached it in public, or but rarely, far less have written upon the subject, had it not been represented as a dangerous and destructive heresy; and people been cautioned against hearing me, on that account.

5. I have been frequently desired to preach upon the subject, expressly; and could not well refuse, without betraying a cowardly disposition.

6. I ask, Who is the best man; he who preaches the truth contrary to his judgement, for interest, or to gain applause; or he that fairly speaks as he thinks, without disguise; although he knows that it will displease his best friends on earth; even upon the supposition that he errs in many points? If there be an heretic, in the world, it is the man who for the love of money or applause, or through the fear of man, preaches that to others which he himself doth not believe. "He that is such, is subverted, and sinneth; being condemned of himself." Tit. iii. 11.

7. If we are to hold forth nothing to mankind, but what all are agreed in, we must discourse upon very few subjects; for I do not recollect so much as one, but what people either disagree about the thing itself, or the manner of explaining and holding it; no! not even the being and perfections of God; nor any point of doctrinal, experimental, or even practical religion.

8. We are to endeavor to teach mankind what they know not, as well as to confirm them in what they are already taught; should keep back nothing that may be profitable to them;

should give meat to strong men, as well as milk to babes, and should not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. We ought to justify the ways of God to men, to shew the necessity and harmony of Divine Revelation, and take pains to convert infidels; all which things are more promoted by this view than any other.

As to your question, why I do not dwell more upon it? I answer:

1. There are a thousand other subjects in the Bible, besides this; and all deserve consideration, according to their weight and importance.

2. I have an utter aversion to going always in the same round of matter or manner; and, therefore I frequently vary in both.

3. There are many other subjects of more present importance than the belief of this; such as repentance, faith, hope, love, obedience, &c. and therefore ought to be more frequently insisted on, in proportion to their present use.

4. There are many scenes of providence and grace to take place in the universe, before the general Restoration; such as the Millennium, the calling of the Jews, the universal spread of the gospel through the earth, &c. These things are much nearer, and therefore the Scripture speaks more of them; and what God speaks most of, in his word, we should discourse of most to the people.

5. This doctrine, though it may have its use in converting men; and certainly enables those who believe it, to set forth the terrors of the Lord, and his mercies, in a more striking manner than otherwise they could; yet it is chiefly useful in comforting the people of God, and, in

part relieving them from that bitter anguish which their tender minds feel, from the consideration of the vast numbers that perish; and, therefore, may not be so proper for a popular audience as many other subjects.

6. The plan of this grand Restoration is so vast, includes so many different and seemingly contradictory dispensations, that it cannot be fairly stated, and fully defended, in one sermon, and especially the objections answered; and many persons are not capable of taking in and digesting at once, so many subjects as are necessary to the understanding of this matter, and have not patience to attend to a long series of demonstrations, arguments, and proofs; and, therefore, this doctrine should not be introduced by any man, in any place, unless he has opportunity, to give it a fair investigation; and, therefore, I never mention it at all, at my first preaching in any place; nor unless I have sufficient opportunities to discuss it.

7 *Christ* says to his disciples—"I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now," St. John, xvi. 12. And St. Paul says—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in *Christ:* I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye are not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able." 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised, to discern both good and evil." Heb. v. 14. Therefore, as the Saviour and his apostles adapted their subjects and discourses to the circumstances of

their hearers, and treated them in a gentle manner; so should we Prudence, patience, and care, should always be used in discoursing on a doctrine so deep and awful as this; and, especially, as it hath been so little known of late ages.

8. I would wish to establish well the first principles of Christianity, before I meddle with any thing else; and as to the doctrine of the Restoration, I would rather that it should seem to be naturally inferred from truths already known, than delivered as an independent system: I, therefore, seldom or ever make it a leading point in my discourses; but sometimes lead to it, as a natural consequence of what has been said. After all, I would choose that men should discover it themselves, by carefully reading the Scriptures, without prejudice, believing them to be strictly true; by living in love towards God and man; by walking in humility, often reflecting on their former estate; and constantly viewing the sufficiency of *Christ*, and the boundless love of their great Creator; rather than to learn it of any man, far less still, of such an unworthy worm as I am.

9. As far as I know my own heart, truth, in love is my constant aim. I am unconnected with any party; and am not so prejudiced in favor of any thing that I hold, but that I would willingly be convinced in any thing, by proper evidence; and when so convinced, I am ready to retract publicly. As, therefore, I do not feel myself personally interested to support the system, right or wrong; I have, therefore, dwelt

much less upon it, than most preachers do upon their particular sentiments.

10. When I first embraced these views I was obliged to give some account of my reasons; and I chose rather to do it by writing than preaching: Accordingly, I published my sentiments, and answers to many objections; which publications being in the hands of those to whom I preached, made it less necessary for me to discourse upon those matters in public, or even in private, as I could refer to what I had written; and with the same view, I am inclined to publish these familiar discourses, which we have had together; after which it will be less necessary than ever for me to preach the Restoration publicly; yet, I will not wholly avoid it at convenient times, and in proper circumstances.

11. Lastly, as I know so much of the nature of man, as to be sensible that he turns, with disgust and loathing, from what is perpetually crammed down his throat; but relishes that which he falls upon, as it were accidentally, and comes into by little and little; I have always made it a rule never to introduce it, in public or private, unless where it was earnestly desired, nor ever to continue it long together; and, above all, never to question people upon the subject, after discoursiug upon it; asking them, saying, Do you believe it? &c. Nor would I ever wish to press them with the arguments at once, and oblige them immediately to yield; as this kind of conduct, so far from answering any good purposes, commonly sets them against what is thus intruded upon them. It is the best way to give time and leisure to persons, whom you

would wish to convince; and let them exe their own faculties.

Friend. I must confess that what you advanced is highly satisfactory to me, a trust will be so to many others who may these conversations, which I hope to have pleasure of seeing in print before long; a the mean time, I wish for a blessing to a your labors, and that you may be an instru of much good to mankind in your day and eration, and that you may obtain a crow life from the Lord the righteous judge, in day of his appearing.

Minister. I thank you most kindly for benevolent wishes, I heartily wish the blessing may come to yourself. And if I been an instrument of giving you any sat tion, let all the glory be to God, but let me an interest in your prayers.

END OF THE DIALOGUES.

The following is taken from a course of Lectures on the Prophecies, by the Reverend Author of the preceding Dialogues.

LECTURE XLII.

The grand and concluding Scene of Divine Revelation; the End of the Mediatorial Kingdom. GOD ALL IN ALL. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

I am now come in the course of these Lectures, to the grand closing scene: our Saviour's resignation of the kingdom delegated to him by the Father, after he shall have accomplished all the glorious designs for which it was committed into his faithful hands.

This is a very deep, important and interesting subject, and I feel myself incapable of doing justice to it, but as the Lord has helped me hitherto, even beyond my expectation, I trust he will not forsake me at the close. The grandeur of the subject is such as inspires my soul with a reverential awe that language would fail to de-

scribe. And having employed considerable time and attention in the contemplation thereof, I feel its consequence and weight in a manner that I cannot express. But having the unerring word of God for my directory here, as I have had all along, I shall venture to tread this devious path, and endeavor to paint as well as I am able, the glorious scene with which the book of divine Revelation closes; when the blessed and glorious Redeemer, having subdued all things to himself, shall resign the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

This is the only passage of Scripture that contains any intimation of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father, but as it was written by divine inspiration, this grand event and closing scene is by no means to be disputed, or explained away.

In discoursing upon this glorious subject, I shall follow the order of the words, and make such remarks as may present themselves to my mind as I pass along.

Then cometh the end, &c. These words teach us the important truth that the Mediatorial dispensation will as certainly come to a period or close, as any other dispensation ever did; though it is by no means of so short a duration as many take it to be. Some make it to end at the second coming of Christ; and others immediately after the general Judgement: but I have in the course of these Lectures given my thoughts so fully upon these opinions and the reasons why I cannot concur with them, is that I trust I have no need to repeat them in this place. We may *here* once more observe, that the word rendered

everlasting, does not signify *endless*, even when applied to the kingdom of Christ; (as it frequently is in the scriptures) since here it is positively asserted, that there shall be *an end* to the glorious kingdom of the son of God, so often called *an everlasting kingdom* in our translation: but which I humbly apprehend, might better be called *a kingdom of ages.*

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; but not until he hath put down all rule and authority, and all power. For the kingdom was given to him for this very purpose, and this he will certainly accomplish, to the praise and glory of his name. His engagements he must fulfil, according to the nature and tenor of the counsel of peace, which was between the Father and his well beloved Son; for (as the prophet says) "The counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zec. vi. 13. And according to the inspired language of Isaiah, there seems to have been the nature of a covenant between the Father and the Son, which appears in his being given for a covenant to the people, Chap. xlii. 6. xlix. 8, and the words in Chap. liii. 10, 11, are fairly capable of being rendered in such a manner as to make a mutual agreement evident. If he shall make his soul a sin offering, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," &c.

And the words of Christ himself in St. John, vi. 37, 40, seem very plainly to imply that he came down from heaven upon an errand of great importance, and which he had engaged to execute, nor can he leave any part of his work unfinished.

God the Father having given him all things without exception, according to those texts more than once already quoted in this work (St. John, iii. 35. xiii. 3. xvii. 2, compared with St. Matthew xi. 27, and St. Luke x. 22) expects that the Son of his love will put a final and total end to all rebellion, and bring all the rightful subjects of the Almighty Sovereign back again to their allegiance. And Jesus evidently considers himself under obligations to perform this great work before he delivers up the kingdom to the Father. And I cannot but think that he is fully qualified for the performance of all that he hath engaged to do, and that he will certainly accomplish it.

For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

It is of absolute necessity that his reign shall endure until there is no more opposition, no more rebellion, or disobedience, to be found in the wide creation. "Jehovah said unto my Adonai, or Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psal. cx. 1. This the modern Jews apply to David, but it is certain that in our Saviour's time they understood it to relate to Christ, or the Messiah, the Son of David, although they were puzzled at our Lord's question, and were not able to resolve him how the Messiah could be born the son, and Lord of David at the same time. See St. Matt. xxii.

42, 43, 44, 45. St. Mark, xii. 35, 36, 37. St. Luxe, xx. 41, 42, 43, 44.

And St. Peter applies those words of David directly to Jesus, saying, "For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts, ii. 34, 35, 36.

When our blessed Saviour was exalted at the Father's right hand according to the Scriptures, then this promise began to be fulfilled. He was then set "Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world (or age) but also in that which is to come." And the Father "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Ephes. i. 21, 22. Our Lord "is gone to heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him." 1 Peter, iii. 22.

Thus all things were put under him in the divine purpose, without exception, but all things are not yet put under him in the sense of these words in 1 Cor. xv. 25, because it is said that *he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet:* which plainly shews that it is not yet the case. And the words of the apostle in this epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. ii 8, express the same idea, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that

is not put under him; but now we see not yet
things put under him."—Here it is evident, tl
in the purpose of God all things are put un
Christ, and subjected to him in so univer
a manner, as there is not the least excepti
yet it is equally evident that all thi
are not yet actually put under him: the div
counsels, respecting this important matter,
not fulfilled before the eyes of creatures:
they must be. All the enemies of our L
must come to be subject to him in a sense
different from what ever hath yet taken pla
and Christ must reign until this grand purp
shall be fully accomplished. God says, "I h
sworn by myself, the word is gone out of
mouth in righteousness, and shall not retu
That unto me every knee shall bow and ev
tongue shall swear." Isai. xlv. 23. And
apostle St. Paul, after speaking of our d
Saviour's amazing humiliation even to the deat
the cross, says, "Wherefore God also hath hi
ly exalted him, and given him a name which
above every name; that in the name of Je
every knee should bow, of things in heav
and things in earth, and things under the ea
and that every tongue should confess that Je
Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Fath
Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. When this comes to be
tually fulfilled, then it may be truly said, that
our Lord's enemies are in the strictest se
put under his feet, but not before; and this
spoken of by the Apostle as something futu
and far remote.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Dea
or more properly, *Death, the last enemy shall*
destroyed.

There are some who would wish to confine this destruction to the death of the body, or that which is called the natural death; but to me it appears, that every thing that bears the name of *death* in the sacred Scriptures, must be included, and is really intended here. Death and misery of every kind shall be abolished, done away, swallowed up in victory, &c. and nothing but life and happiness shall remain. I cannot help considering this as the genuine sense and meaning of the following glorious promises. He will swallow up death in victory; and Adonia Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces." &c. Isaiah, xxv. 8.

I will ransom them (even such who perish in their iniquity and sin, as is evident from the context) from the power of the grave: (or hell) I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues: O grave (or hell) I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Hosea, xiii. 14.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

Then shall the song of triumph be sung, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" And the great and mighty challenge shall be proclaimed through all the empire of Jehovah, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (or hell) where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. But surely while sin, which is the sting of death, is found in existence, and while pain, sorrow, crying, &c. continue in the universe, it can hardly be said,

that death is swallowed up in victory; and while the second death lasts, which is certainly the most terrible kind of death, how can it be said, O death where is thy sting? and, O grave (or hell) where is thy victory? But to me, scarce any thing appears more plain, than the certain annihilation or total destruction of all that ever bore the name of death. Then it may be truly said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so hath grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. v. 20, 21.

But prior to the total destruction of death, all other enemies, that is, all rebellious creatures, shall be humbled, and shall willingly submit to Jesus, and be his enemies no longer: for certainly at the time when the last enemy shall be destroyed, no enemies can remain in the universe.

For he hath put all things; under his feet: but when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.

This reasoning of the apostle seems almost self evident: for nothing can be more manifest, than that he (the eternal Father) who put all things under Christ the Son, is himself excepted. Even as Pharaoh said to Joseph, when he made him governor or ruler over all the land of Egypt.

"Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art! Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in *the throne* will I be greater than thou. And

Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand,and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." Gen. xli. 39—44.

The whole of this transaction was a wonderful type, and a most beautiful illustration of the subject now upon.

Pharaoh set up Joseph over the land of Egypt because there was none so discreet and wise as he was, that understood the matter so well, was so competent to every part of the business, and that would be so faithful and diligent in the discharge of the same.—Pharaoh in choosing Joseph, and placing him over all the land, shewed his own wisdom and discernment to be great Even so the wisdom and goodness of God shone conspicuously in placing his dear Son in so glorious and important a situation. For where is there one in heaven or earth worthy to be named in comparison with Jesus? so prudent, so wise, so faithful, so just, so competent to every part of his work? The Father hath therefore entrusted him with all the concerns of the wide extended universe, as Pharaoh did Joseph with the land of Egypt, and all things therein.

Pharaoh gave Joseph full power, and unlimited and absolute authority over all his people, but excepted himself, in the same manner as the

Apostle declares the Father to be excepted. *It is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.*

But this exception being expressly made (though it was evidently implied in the nature of the thing) plainly shews that none else can possibly be excepted, whether things in heaven, things on earth, or things under the earth. Christ is truly and really over all, (the Father only excepted) *God blessed forever.* Rom. ix. 5.

All are put under him in the most absolute and universal manner, and all are commanded to bow the knee to him, as the Egyptians were commanded to bow the knee before Joseph. To Jesus Christ the Saviour, every knee shall surely bow, and every tongue shall certainly confess him Lord.

"When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph, what he saith to you do." Gen. xli. 55. So the Father, having given all things into the hands of Christ, and committed all authority and judgement to him, directeth all mankind to look to him for salvation; his language is, "Go to Jesus; whatsoever he saith to you do it. Believe on Jesus, see that ye refuse not him that speaketh; if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." God requires all men to hearken to Jesus, and to do his will without murmuring or disputing, upon pain of his severe displeasure. The Son of God is appointed to be the universal Lord and ruler over all, and all shall submit to him at last.

Joseph had the absolute disposal of all the Egyptians and all their affairs, both by the appointment of Pharaoh, and also by their own consent, as appears by the story at large; so the blessed Jesus has absolute authority over all rational creatures, by the Father's appointment and good pleasure, and shall finally have dominion over all by their voluntary submission and free consent. So that the administration of Joseph over the land of Egypt, was one of the most lively pictures of the universal government, authority and dominion of Christ that can be found, and applies beautifully in almost every instance.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The time, the glorious time will come when all thing shall be willingly subject to the Son of God, and shall submit to his control: as has been, I think, plainly proved in the foregoing course of Lectures. When this event takes place, and there is not an enemy remaining in all the universe, then shall the Son of God deliver up the kingdom to the Father, in the most grand, glorious, and honorable manner, and be himself also subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Some are apt to say, that if Christ should resign the kingdom to the Father, and become subject to him that put all things under him, that his character would be thereby lowered and brought down. But I must declare that I think quite the reverse: even that his character will

be exalted in the highest and most glorious manner. For let me ask any one, when did Joseph appear to most advantage? whether when he had the government of Egypt committed to his hands, and went forth invested with absolute authority over the whole land? or when after sustaining that high office for twice seven years, and doing all things well, to the full content of both the king and the people, he came loaded with honor and glory, and resigned the government of Egypt again to Pharaoh, who had given it to him?

When he went forth he was glorious, but when he had finished his work how much more glorious and honorable did he appear?—or to mention a recent instance, fresh in the memory of man, when did *General Washington* appear most grand and exalted? when the command of the American army was given to him by the free choice of the people? or when after eight years enduring the fatigues of war, and taking part with his soldiers in all their dangers and sufferings, and beholding his labors and designs crowned with success he came amidst the acclamations of the people, and resigned his great and weighty commission to that august body from whom he received it? Was he less loved, honored and esteemed by all the people when he laid down than when he received the important trust? Nay, was he not much more so? how much superior did he appear in that awful day than he had ever done before in any period of his life! But what are either of these instances, though grand and glorious in themselves, compared with *the astonishing* event and overpowering subject,

on which I am treating? Is it possible for imagination itself, in its utmost stretch, on its most lofty and towering wing, to conceive the glory and majesty of that great day, far remote, and distant from human view, and only known to JEHOVAH, when Christ the Son of God, having subdued, humbled, gathered together in one, or reheaded, reconciled and restored all things; and having completely finished the great work that he undertook, shall approach the sacred throne of the Father, attended by the countless millions of his redeemed and reconciled creatures, and resigning the kingdom into his hands who gave him power over all things, shall assume with awful dignity a new character, which is expressed by the Apostle, by being also himself subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all?

I have ventured far already, but cannot feel myself willing to quit the subject, without once more endeavoring to represent its beauties in the form of a speech, which I trust will not be altogether unworthy of the Son of God to utter in the presence of his Father, and all the heavenly hosts on that resplendent day.

Speech of the King of kings and Lord of lords, upon his resigning his Imperial Dignity to God the Father, having forever put down all rule, and authority, and power.

"My Father and my God, behold me, and the numerous children which thou hast given me, as the reward of my labor, and the fruit of my pain. I have at length subdued all my enemies, and brought them freely and heartily to submit to my *sceptre*. Long and severe was the struggle,

and many that loved me doubted whet
should ever so far prevail as to bring my gi
enemies to be my friends; but I have succ
according to thy will, and thy glorious pur
Thou didst create all to glorify thy name,
joy thy love, and to be happy in beholdin
light of thy countenance, and when some
creatures fell from their first estate, thou
appoint me to reclaim and restore them.

"Father, the long expected time is at la
rived, when thy Son having accompished t
signs, approaches thy throne to resign his
dom to thee. Thou didst give him powe
all, and he hath given eternal life to all
thou gavest him. All that thou, O F
gavest me, have at length willingly return
to me, and behold I present them before
this day, reconciled to thee, to me, and to
other. See, my Father, and behold throu
this mighty throng, there is not one kne
what bows in the most cordial manner,
tongue but is ready to shout thy praise, n
heart that doth not overflow with love to
All are thy willing and obedient subjects, re
ed from all their evil ways, and forever co
ed in the purest habits of goodness. Loo
Father, through the wide extended uni
for thou beholdest all thy works in every
ation with the utmost ease, see, there is n
rebellious creature to be found! Where sir
reigned and abounded, grace now reig
abounds much more. All confusion and di
now destroyed, the whole creation exhibit
great scene of peace, harmony, and divine
All creatures are now wholly delivered fro

bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. All things in the universe are gathered together in one, are reconciled to thy government, and conformed to thine image and shall never more go astray. Sin, sorrow, crying, pain, and death shall never more be known in thy extensive empire. Thou shalt be all, and in all. Thy subjects no longer need a Mediator, they are all righteous and holy, and capable of beholding thy face with joy. I have seen the travail of my soul, and am forever satisfied. Thou hast fulfilled all thy promises to me in the completest manner, I have also performed my words to all my people, whom I have redeemed to thee, and from this day resign them to thee. Now they are all one, as thou Father and I are one; one spirit rules in them all, they have all the same designs, even to glorify thy name, and promote the happiness of each other.

"Thou art now ALL IN ALL, and let all thy works praise thee.

"Thy glory shall endure for ever, thou shalt rejoice in all thy works. This is the scene which completes that joy which was set before me, for which I endured the cross, despising the shame.

"To this bright and glorious day I directed my view; I beheld all things put under me, I saw, beyond the darkness and obscurity of sin, pain, and death, the glorious day of light arise on all thy creatures.

"It is come, it is come, this is the day I looked for. The night is forever past, and eternal day is risen upon all creation, to set no more. Shout, O Heavens, it is done, it is done. Let all

creatures adore thee, for this is the display of glorious, wise and gracious designs.

"Thou didst entrust me with the executic thy wonderous plan, and this I have compl Henceforth I resign the kingdom to thee; be thyself the Lord over all.

"In my whole process I have always beer example to all my flock, of which I am still, shall remain, the Shepherd and head, I will th fore shew an example to all thy creatures shall never be forgotten, which shall forever firm thy authority over them; behold, I lay sceptre and my crown at thy feet, and profess fore all the hosts of heaven, and the numer armies that acknowledge my sway, that g and mighty as I am, I am subject unto thee bow myself before thine awful throne, I su to thee as all thy creatures have voluntarily mitted to me. Behold me as the head of all cipality and power, and with me behold all creatures submit and bow to thy sovereign sw

Here the scene of divine revelation cl GOD IS ALL IN ALL. I can go no further. astonishing subject drinks up all my spirits! I lost and swallowed up in the vast unbou ocean of love!

O let my soul absorbed be,
While God doth me surround!
As a small drop in the vast sea
Is lost and can't be found!

"Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent re eth;" and he shall reign forever and ever. Am

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